UNIVERSITY "ST. CYRIL AND METHODIUS" – SKOPJE
INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL HISTORY

Dragan Gjalevski

BYZANTINE DIPLOMACY IN THE BALKANS AND THE PONTIC STEPPE (C.850-1020)

Cover motif: "Byzantine emperor Leon VI receives a Bulgarian delegation"
Miniature from the Madrid manuscript of A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811-1057 from John Skylitzes, XII-XIII century; Vitr. 26-2, folio 145r

UNIVERSITY "ST. CYRIL AND METHODIUS" – SKOPJE
INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL HISTORY

Dragan Gjalevski

BYZANTINE DIPLOMACY IN THE BALKANS AND THE PONTIC STEPPE (C.850-1020)

Skopje, 2024

Table of Content

PREFACE V

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION VII

INTRODUCTION 1

DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN THE BALKANS 7

A fight for hegemony: The Balkans between Byzantine and Bulgarian aspirations 13

The Byzantine Empire, Boris and the shaping of a new Christian state in the Balkans 15

Simeon and the struggle for hegemony in the Balkans 22

Petar, basileus of Bulgaria, and the triumph of the Byzantine Empire 38

In search of allies: Croatia and the Serbian principalities 45

Battle for the Balkans: Basileios II and Samuil Kometopoulos 59

THE DIPLOMATIC MEASURES IN THE PONTIC STEPPE 77

A Problematic ally: The Magyars and the kingdom of Hungary 81

Containment of the Pontic steppe threats: Pechenegs 91

Between a friend and a foe: Kievan Rus 97

STATECRAFT, FOREIGN POLICY AND STRATEGY 109

Statecraft 119

Byzantine diplomacy in the "Mirror for Princes" 124

Shaping the Byzantine Statecraft: Factors of Influence 132

Byzantine Foreign Policy: State Interests and Ends 140

Statecraft and the concept of Grand Strategy 149

Byzantine Strategy in the Balkans and the role of Military in Diplomacy 167
Strategy of "Defence in depth" 170
"Provoke and observe" policy 173
Military deterrence: show of force and intimidation 178
The Byzantine offensive strategy 184

THE BYZANTINE ART OF DIPLOMACY 191
Byzantine Diplomacy: Features and Structure 195
Diplomatic structure 196
Institutionalization and ritualization of diplomacy. Protocols, ceremonies, treaties 215
Tools, Skills and Praxis of Byzantine Diplomacy 227
Diplomatic methods, techniques and the art of negotiation 229
Rhetoric and oratory skills 251
Correspondence 261
Treaties and ratification procedure: Balkans and Pontic steppe 265
Diplomatic Assets, Means and Arguments 291
Financial assets 292
Imperial aulic titles 229
"State" gifts 309
Christianity as a means of diplomacy 313
Civilizational "prestige" 334
Ceremonies 339
Dynastic marriages 351
Diplomatic arguments: History, Ethnography, and Religion 357
Conclusion: Byzantine diplomacy, its "operating principles" and the policy of hegemony in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe 365

BIBLIOGRAPHY 377

Primary Sources 377

Secondary Literature 381

INDEX 407

Latin Index 407

Hellenic Index 407

Index of Personal names 409

Index of other terms 412

Preface

The monography that you see in front of you has started its journey in the now distant 2013 as a doctoral dissertation that was publicly defended at the Institute of National History in Skopje, my home institution. In relation to the dissertation the title has been modified, while the text has been substantially rearranged and complemented, and at an overall, it is a result of a decade-long research and thorough study of Byzantine diplomacy. The aim of this monography is to give, as much as possible, a comprehensive and analytically detailed picture of the Byzantine diplomacy in the Balkan Peninsula and the Pontic steppe during the apogee of the Byzantine Empire, in the period between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century, when the imperial throne in Constantinople was reigned by the representatives of Macedonian dynasty. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who had a part in the creation of this book, to my colleagues who helped me many years ago with the extremely important literature for the writing my doctoral dissertation, to my institution which is the patron of this publication, as well as to my family who unwaveringly supported me on this long creative path of mine.

Note on transliteration

Although in the sources the term for the population is Romaioi (Romans), while the state is referenced as the Empire of the Romans or Romania, in this book we use the generally accepted terms Byzantines for the population and consequently, Byzantine Empire. However, in relation to personal names we have transliterated Byzantine names from the Medieval (romaika) Hellenic (e.g., Konstantinos, Ioannes and Theodoros) instead of Latinize or Anglicize these (Basileios instead of Basil), and we do the same for the Slavic (e.g., Gavril, Jovan and Simeon) and the Arabic names, without marking the long vowels (as with the Hellenic transliteration). The Byzantine aulic titles and imperial officials are transliterated in the same manner (e.g., basileus, magister officiorum, magistros, patrikios, logothetes tou dromou and strategos) and written in italic. The emperors of the Late Antique Period (e.g., Theodosius, Marcian, Anastasius, Justinian or Tiberius) until the reign of Emperor Maurikios (Maurice) are in Latin, when the first signs of a slow, but steady, decline in the official use of the Latin language in the Byzantine Empire can be observed. Exception is made for the authors of Byzantine sources (Theophanes Continuatus, Leo Grammaticus or John Skylitzes), for it is more convenient, in our opinion, for the reader to search these for future reference, as well as for common geographical and city names (Danube, Vardar, Thessalonica or Constantinople). We also make a distinction in relation to some medieval states and tribes before and after the Christianisation. For instance, pagan Bulgars vs. Christian Bulgarians, and pagan Magyars in contrast with the Christian kingdom of Hungary. Furthermore, the quotations in my monography are mainly from the English translations of the Byzantine, Latin, Georgian, Armenian, Russian and Arab sources. And finally, when we use the term "nation" it should not be understood in its modern meaning, but as a sedentary group of people of the same ethnic origin who did not form a state with institutions, chancelleries and officials.

Introduction

"The institution of embassies, sacred as it is in other respects, is in this connection of the highest value. Conferring with these, the king will know that which is afar no less than that which is near, nor will foresight for his kingdom be bounded by the sense of sight...He will break off a war that threatens, and will terminate a war which has broken out, and will adjust everything else in time, for by the agency of embassies he will be able, like the god, 'to see and hear everything'. To these let him be accessible, and 'gentle as a father', whether they come from near or from afar, for so I have heard Homer speaking once for all of the king that is at peace with himself"

Synesius, "On Imperial Rule", col.1100.

During the second half of the 20th century, it was mentioned on several occasions that "...the diplomacy of the Byzantine Empire is still waiting for its historian",[1] a claim that was first made by the scholar Dimitri Obolensky at the XII International Congress of Byzantine Studies held in Ohrid in 1963. This statement of his was again confirmed accurate almost thirty years later on the XXIV Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, acknowledging that it is still valid.[2] However, despite highlighting this situation, scholars have not presented an opinion that there was no attempt in the past to study this field of Byzantine history. In fact, even before the congress in Ohrid, during the first half of the 20th century, several scholars tried to research Byzantine diplomacy, focusing primarily on its general aspects without diving deeper into more thorough analysis.

Today, this picture is completely different. Throughout the last couple of decades, and mostly the last few years, a substantial number of papers important for the study of Byzantine diplomacy have been published by scholars researching this field in Journals and

1 Dimitry Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994), 1.

2 Aleksander Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, Cambridge, March 1990, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992), 3.

other Volumes of publications, in proceedings and monographies, among which the book of Telemachos Lounghis *Les ambassades byzantines en Occident, depuis la foundation des états barbares jusqu' aux Crôisades (407-1096)*, the publication of Stelios Lampakis Byzantine diplomacy: a seminar, the monography of Edward N. Luttwak under the title *The Grand strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, the proceedings from the *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge*, March 1990, edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin, the publication *Ambassadeurs et ambassades au coeur des relations diplomatiques Rome – Occident Médiéval – Byzance (VIIIe s. avant J.-C – XIIe s. après J.-C)* edited by Audrey Becker and Nicolas Drocourt, and another publication from the XXIII International Congress of Byzantine Studies Round Table held in Belgrade in 2016 and published in 2020 under the title *La diplomatie byzantine, de l'Empire romain aux confins de l'Europe (Ve – XVe s.)*, as well as the book *Diplomatie sur le Bosphore* by Nicolas Drocourt, which complement the already attained general knowledge of Byzantine diplomacy.

The basic problem faced by scholars studying and researching this segment of Byzantine history is the lack of sources that contain relevant information about the Empire's international relations i.e., its diplomacy. Actually, if a detailed analysis of these same sources is carried out, it can be noticed that there are no written materials whose focus is the diplomatic activity of the Byzantine government, both for the period which is a subject of this research, as well as for the period before or after it. Basically, the Byzantines did not have the practice like some other states e.g., the Frankish Empire, or China, to record the political activities of the ruler and his advisors. There is no Byzantine equivalent in the sources for the documentary manner of the annals of the Frankish kings in which formal ceremonies and other court events were recorded, or the state organization of the founder of the T'ang dynasty who established a historiographical service which recorded the 'official' history of the state only a decade after coming to power. In the case of China, this was done by diarists who recorded the emperor's daily public activities and the decision-making process at the court, while another subdivision recorded the more general political course of the dynasty.[3] In regard to the Byzantine Empire, the information needed to study the diplomatic activities of the central government is found scattered among many materials written by officials employed in the imperial service, or chroniclers, who had access to important information and documents.

Most important source for the research of the Byzantine diplomacy in the period from 850s to 1020s is *De Administrando Imperio*, a manuscript compiled on an initiative of Kon-

[3] Jonathan Shepard, "The Uses of 'History' in Byzantine Diplomacy: Observations and Comparisons", in *Porphyrogenita. Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides*, ed. Charalambos Dendrinos et al. (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2003), 107-109.

stantinos VII Porphyrogennetos. It represents an extremely important material that reports on the general and regional, the political and military ends of the Byzantine government in the middle of the 10th century. The ceremonial form of the diplomatic activities of the Byzantine emperor, which were very frequent at this time, is presented in *The Book of Ceremonies*, the second manuscript initiated by Konstantinos VII. However, a small chapter entitled "On Envoys" (Περὶ πρέσβεων) that is found in the Byzantine military manual *On Strategy*, apparently compiled in its final form during the mid-10th century, provides evidence for the practical aspects of the Byzantine diplomacy. It gives a general overview, but at the same time a kind of counselling, on how the procedure of selecting imperial diplomatic envoys should have been carried out and the character traits that the candidate should possess, as well as several practical guidelines according to which the envoys should act while they were on a mission. Another similar source that provides some account about Byzantine diplomacy is the *Excerpta de legationibus*, a contemporary used title for a text probably inspired by Porphyrogennetos, but not composed by him personally, which contains excerpts from Roman and Byzantine reports about diplomatic exchanges, and presents the idea of how Byzantine diplomacy should have been practiced in the field. Apparently, it represented some sort of an informal practical manual both for the candidates and for the already elected diplomatic envoys.

All other information that are extremely significant for the research of Byzantine diplomacy derive from other Byzantine sources, such as chronicles, histories, lives of Saints, military manuals, or from the preserved correspondence of Byzantine envoys and other officials who were appointed on important positions in the state. Highly important sources for the practical aspect of the Byzantine diplomacy are the letters that the patriarch of Constantinople Nikolaos Mystikos sent to Simeon, the correspondence of the envoy Leon Choerosphactès, as well as that of Theodoros Daphnopates on behalf of the Byzantine emperor Romanos I Lekapenos. The sources which present partial information about the frequent diplomatic activities of the Byzantine emperors are: the *Chronicle* of Theophanes Continuatus, *A synopsis of Byzantine history* by John Skylitzes, the *History* of Leo the Deacon, Genesius and his *On the Reign of the Emperors*, but also other chroniclers, such as Michael Psellos. The military manuals are also part of this group of sources, starting with *The Strategikon* of Emperor Maurikios, followed by *The Taktika* of Leon VI (886-912), and ending with *The Strategikon* of Kekaumenos from the second half of 11th century. This group of sources also includes the lives of saints, such as those of the Slavic brothers Constantine-Cyril and Methodius and that of St. Nikon Metanoeite. Significant data on the diplomatic activities of the Byzantine government can also be found in many sources of non-Byzantine origin, such as the *Chronicle* of the Priest of Diocleia and *The Russian Primary Chronicle* (Povest' vremennykh Let).

The monography in front of you is a result of the author's interest in studying the foreign policy of the Byzantine Empire, the relations it created with other political entities (states, nations and tribes) and the consequences that arose from these diplomatic activities aimed at achieving political and military dominance in the Balkans, as well as the dissemination of the Byzantine political influence in the Pontic steppe region, which, from a geopolitical stand point, was indivisible from the Empire and had a strong impact on the imperial policy. The goal is not to carry out overall research that will encompass the entire millennial history of the Byzantine foreign policy, since an undertaking of that kind, in our opinion, can hardly be done just by one person and in a relatively short period of time. Therefore, this book will focus on a strictly defined period of the Byzantine history, the years between the 850s and the 1020s, which almost identically correspond to the reigning period of the Macedonian dynasty and represent the apogee of the Byzantine political activities related to international relations with other states, nations and tribes, with emphasis on the Balkans and the Pontic steppe region, activities which the contemporary science encompasses under the term *diplomacy*.

Among scholars, today, there is not a single consensual conceptualization of the term *diplomacy* that can be used as a basis for its theorization. In fact, 'diplomacy' and 'diplomatic' are two terms used to describe several different meanings. Thus, they are characterized as "monstrously imprecise", simultaneously denoting "content, character, method, manner and art". The term diplomacy, although it refers to conduct of official (usually bilateral) relations between sovereign states, can frequently be confused with the content of the foreign affairs of the state as a whole, or with the conduct of foreign policy itself, which is why it is often used in the academic world as a synonym for foreign policy in relation to the first example, or statecraft when it comes to the second case, although this term also includes other affairs related to managing and governing a state. Furthermore, it explains the use of diplomats i.e., officials in charge of conducting diplomacy, as well as the manner in which foreign relations were conducted, where the adjective 'diplomatic' is commonly used.[4] In relation to the Byzantine Empire, the term diplomacy will, nevertheless, encompass all of the aspects outlined above.

It should be pointed out that all of the abovementioned theories are definitions and concepts that refer to the contemporary currents of international relations of states that began its development from the middle of 17th century, and were formed as a result of its evolution, the early development of which can be traced back all the way to the ancient period and the emergence of the first states. Despite this, all contemporary defini-

[4] Christer Jönsson, "Theorising Diplomacy", in *Routledge Handbook of Diplomacy and Statecraft*, ed. B.J.C. McKercher (Abington: Routledge, 2012), 15.

tions indicate that diplomacy is not in fact a branch of social behaviour of human society that is completely separate from other similar activities of the states, for instance international relations and statecraft, but that they are intertwined and even overlapping in some segments of their activities. Hence, our research will focus not only to the already established parameters in the Byzantine studies in regards to what Byzantine diplomacy should encompass, presented through an analysis of the diplomatic tools, methods, techniques, skills, assets and means used by the imperial government - a modern, but nevertheless necessary, in our opinion, systematization that the Byzantines were not familiar with, in order to better comprehend the essence of their diplomatic activities, but also to familiarize with its other two aspects, international relations and statecraft. More precisely, to determine if it is possible to identify the existence, of course in some rudimentary form, of these two aspects in this period of Byzantine history and, if so, how much these influenced the process which shaped the foreign policy that the imperial government was implementing towards other polities, as well as the process of formation of its short-term and long-term political ends. Additionally, part of the administrative structures of the Byzantine Empire will be also analysed, more precisely the imperial office of the *basileus*, the office of the *logothetes tou dromou* and the officials who worked there, which were involved in diplomacy and played an active role in international relations. An analysis of the processes of institutionalization and ritualization - specific and inevitable for diplomacy as an institution of international society, will also be carried out, tracing their influence in the shaping the Byzantine diplomacy. Furthermore, the Byzantine military thought will also be taken into account, which through its numerous strategies and tactics that it had formed and shaped, apart from attaining for the security of the state, it also had its place and role in the overall state-level strategy (known today under the term grand strategy), which is a specific feature of statecraft and represented an additional instrument of the Byzantine government for achieving its political ends. And finally, some specific norms of practice, set of rules, but also unwritten conventions and protocols - a kind of an "operating code" of Byzantine diplomacy will be determined, which prescribed behavioural roles, limited the activity within the informal social frames and shaped the expectations of the participants in this institution of international society.

The monography is divided into four chapters. The first two present a general chronological overview of the diplomatic contacts and activities that the Byzantine Empire had across the Balkans and the Pontic steppe, which resulted from the military conflicts, as well as from the political and military ends that its government intended to achieve. In the first chapter, the diplomatic activities of the Byzantines with the states in the Balkan Peninsula e.g., Bulgaria, Croatia, the Serbian principalities, as well as the

Samuil's State are presented, while in the second those with the states and tribes that lived in the region north of the Danube River and the Black Sea, such as the Magyars, Pechenegs and the Rus. The third chapter, which consists of three subchapters, is referring to the art of statecraft i.e., the knowledge and set of skills (ideas, plans, methods, techniques, strategies, tactics, etc.) that the ruling elite possessed and utilized to successfully govern the state and conduct its affairs, followed by the various external and internal factors which influenced the formation and shaping of the Byzantine state-level strategy (grand strategy) and its overall and regional political ends, as well as the role that the military forces had in the international relations of the Byzantine Empire. The last chapter focuses on diplomacy i.e., on its general features presented through the administrative structures that participated in these activities (imperial office of the *basileus*, office of the *logothetes tou dromou*, imperial officials and other influential individuals who were assigned as envoys), the processes of institutionalization and ritualization that had a strong influence on the shaping of the Byzantine diplomacy, as well as on the various diplomatic tools, methods, techniques, skills, assets, means and arguments that the imperial government implemented in its relations with other states, nations and tribes.

Despite the fact that separate segments of the Byzantine diplomacy in the Balkans and in the Pontic steppe have been researched so far, nevertheless a detailed comprehensive whole in a form of a monography for the period between 850s and 1020s has not been elaborated and published. We hope that the book before you will succeed in changing this situation and will contribute to the future scientific research of those interested in studying this field of Byzantine history.

DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN THE BALKANS

"In olden times, therefore, Dalmatia used to start at the confines of Dyrrachium, or Antibari, and used to extend as far as the mountains of Istria, and spread out as far as the river Danube. All this area was under the rule of the Romans, and this province was the most illustrious of all the provinces of the west"

Porphyrogennetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, 30.8-12

The Balkan Peninsula encompasses the territories south of the Sava and Danube rivers at north, the Ionian Sea, the Strait of Otranto and the Adriatic to the west, the Black Sea to the east and the shores of Mediterranean on the Peloponnese to the south, the most striking feature of which are its high mountains. In fact, the name itself derives from a mountain range. In its western part are the Dinaric Mountains, in the eastern part is Stara Planina, known in the past as Haimos, which continues south towards the Rhodopes, while the rest of the peninsula is also filled with numerous mountains, plateaus and lowlands. All of these are interspersed with valleys and several larger rivers which basically determined the population's movement and settlement, as well as the construction of several roads in the past. The most famous among these was the *via Egnatia* road, which ran in the east-west direction from Constantinople, through Thessalonica, to Dyrrachion (Durrës) on the Adriatic coast. The second road was named *via Militaris*. It started from the Byzantine capital and passed through the cities of Arkadioupolis (Lüleburgaz) and Adrianoupolis (Edirne), Philippoupolis (Plovdiv), Serdica (Sofia) and Naissus (Nish), and ended at the city of Sirmium (Belgrade) on the Danube River. The other two important road routes in the Balkans branched from these two. The first started from Adrianoupolis and led north along the Black Sea coast to the Danube and then heading west, it led all the way to Sirmium, while the latter connected the cities of Naissus and Thessalonica via the Morava and Vardar rivers, and thus the two most important roads on the Balkan Peninsula.[5]

[5] For the geographical characteristics of the Balkan Peninsula, see Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe, 500-1453* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 5-24.; Mark Whittow, *The Making*

Apart from being intersected by many mountains, valleys and rivers, the Balkan also has several fertile plains. The most important among these is the Thracian plain, as well as the one in the lower course of the Danube River, north of Stara Planina. Apart from these two larger ones, there are several smaller lowlands in Attica, Boeotia and the Peloponnese, several in Macedonia, on the Albanian coast and in the less fertile Serbian plateau around the Sava and Morava rivers. However, most of these lowlands, except for the Thracian plain, were too small and did not give such yields to be able to maintain large empires.

If a comparison is made between the Balkan Mountains and the Alpine massif, it can be observed that they are not that high, and the migration and settlement of various Slavic tribes and Bulgars on its territory itself indicates that together with the Danube River, these did not represent an insurmountable obstacle for the movement of people. The Dinaric chain of mountains did not prevent Avar and Slavic attacks on the coastal cities during the early 7th century, any more than the mountains in Macedonia or Epirus. Stara Planina, or Haimos, proved to be an even smaller obstacle for the northern tribes. Its narrow gorges along with the river Isker presented not only a road connection between the northern territories and the city of Constantinople, but also a direction for the raids of the steppe tribes and the northern nations.

Towards the end of the 8th century, the Byzantine Empire initiated a more aggressive policy for reintegration of the Balkan regions, especially those that bordered the territories where it managed to maintain its authority. After a successful initial initiative, this policy was temporarily halted in the narrow mountain passes of northern Thrace, where Nikephoros I Genikos (802-811) along with most of his army were killed by the Bulgars led by Krum.[6] The catastrophic military defeat of the Byzantine Empire allowed Bulgaria to expand rapidly across the Balkan territories south and southwest of Mount Haimos, a policy that was zealously pursued by its rulers for the next couple of decades of the 9th century.

This constellation of military and political relations in the Balkans followed by frequent warfare between Byzantines and Bulgars led the Sklaviniai from Macedonia, wedged between these two powerful states, to act in accordance with their own political interests, frequently changing their allegiance. This situation is clearly noted in the sources. As early as 814, three years after the disastrous defeat of the Byzantine army

of Byzantium 600-1025 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 15-19.; Paul Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: a political study of the northern Balkans, 900-1204* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3-7.

6 About the theories regarding the actual title of the Bulgar rulers until the time of Boris and Simeon see Florin Curta, "Qagan, Khan or King? Power in Early Medieval Bulgaria (Seventh to Ninth Century)", *Viator* 37 (2006): 1-31.

in the Haimos passes, there is a record reporting that the Bulgar ruler Krum, in a military campaign directed against the emperor in Constantinople, managed to gather a large army composed of a multitude of "...Avar mercenaries and [members of] all of the Sklaviniai".[7] The signing of a thirty year treaty between Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire after the death of Krum, not only determined the mutual border, but also the spheres of influence.[8] In his letter of 824 sent to Ludwig the Pious (814-840), the emperor Michael II Amorian (820-829) announced that the defeated rebel against Byzantine government, Thomas the Slav, had enlisted soldiers from "...Asiae et Europae partibus, Thraciae, Macedoniae, Thessalonicae et circumiacentibus Sclaviniis".[9] The information itself that in his army, in addition to soldiers from the Balkan *themata*, there were also soldiers who came from among the Slavs living in the vicinity of Thessalonica, notify that after the signing of the Byzantine-Bulgar peace treaty, the regions southwest of Naissus and Philippoupolis, and thus, probably some of the Macedonian Sklaviniai, become part of the Byzantine sphere of influence.[10] The lack of relevant information that would confirm the existence of Byzantine *themata* in this part of the Balkans, points to the fact that these Sklaviniai recognized the hegemony of the emperor in Constantinople.[11] Their submission to the

[7] Fontes *Byzantini Historiam Populorum Jugoslaviae Spectantes* Tomus I, rec. Georgio Ostrogorsky (Beograd: Academia Scientarum Serbica, 1955), 250-251. (thereafter FBHPJS)

[8] This peace agreement according to Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 433.; Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 277-278, was concluded during 816. In contrast to them, Branko Panov, *Srednovekovna Makedonija* Tom III (Skopje: Misla, 1985), 38, makes an assumption that this agreement was signed somewhere between 814-815.

[9] *Fontes Latini Historiae Bulgaricae* Tomus II, ed. Ivan Dujčev, Mihail Vojnov et al. (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1960), 26. (thereafter FLHB); FBHPJS Tomus I, 251, n.5. According to Tibor Živković, *Južni Sloveni pod vizantiskom vlašću 600-1025* (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2007), 170-171, the Sklaviniai participated with personal forces in the rebellion of Thomas the Slav because they were most likely seen as Byzantine subjects, although there is a possibility that they only formally and legally recognized the authority of the emperor with obligation to provide military aid, and their participation in this rebellion on the side of the usurper (who, with the permission of the Arab caliph, was crowned as Byzantine emperor by the Patriarch of Antioch) should be seen as a move which would provide them certain political benefit. About the coronation of Thomas the Slav see Georgije Ostrogosky, *Istorija Vizantije* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1966), 208.

[10] The life of St. Gregory Decapolite, Fontes *Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae* Tomus IV, ed. Ivan Dujčev, Mihail Vojnov et al. (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1961), 38-39, (thereafter FGHB) reports that the Strymonians freely pirated at the mouth of the Strymon river, which testifies to their independence from the Byzantine state during this period. According to Branko Panov, *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* Tom I (Skopje: INI, 2000), 312, the Strymonians started with their piracy after the defeat of Thomas the Slav. Irena Stefoska, "Strimonskata oblast od VI do početokot na X vek", *Glasnik* 49, no.1-2 (2005): 320, assumes that the piracy of the Strymonians took place in the period between 813 and 821.

[11] The direct authority of the Byzantine emperor over a certain region was possible only if thematic organisation was established in it. In contrast to the Sklaviniai in medieval Macedonia, for which there is no solid evidence that during the first half of the 9th century these were part of any of the Byzantine administrative areas, and that the *thema* Makedonia or the *archontate* of Thessalonika (raised to the rank of *thema*, most likely, no later than 836, although the letter of emperor Michael II to Louis the Pious leaves a possibility that this

Byzantine emperor continued in the following years. Evidence of this continuity, apart from the data presented by the author of the life of Gregory of Dekapolis, according to whom during 836-837 there was an uprising led by the exarch of one of the surrounding Sklaviniai (Σκλαβινίας ἐξάρχοντος) in the vicinity of Thessalonica, a rebellion that was bloodily suppressed by the Byzantines,[12] is also the Bulgarian conquest of the Smolyani that took place during the same year, which states that in the years after the Byzantine-Bulgar peace treaty this Sklavinia was probably within the Byzantine sphere of political influence.[13]

These previously mentioned events clearly show the complexity of the military and political situation in which the Byzantine Empire found itself. However, it must be noted that the fierce resistance of the Sklaviniai in medieval Macedonia against the Byzantine attempts to subjugate them, should not be sought in the military skill and fighting superiority of their population. If we analyse the events that preceded the second half of the 8th century, we can conclude that whenever the Byzantine government could intervene militarily, the Sklaviniai immediately recognized its hegemony or their rebellion was quickly suppressed. The campaigns of emperor Konstantinos V Kopronimos (741-775) and those of the *logothete* Staurakios conducted in 783 are typical examples, as well as the uprisings of the Sklaviniai from the Peloponnese during the

thema existed before 824) were the only administrative regions during that period, the same cannot be said for the Sklaviniai of Ezeritai and Milingoi in the Peloponnese. Although they had certain self-government, in this period they were already under the direct administration of the *strategos* of the *thema* Peloponnesus. More details about the political relations of the Byzantine Empire towards these two Sklaviniai and their rebellions in the 9th and 10th centuries see Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik and tr. Romilly J. H. Jenkins (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967), 49.4-5, 50.6-8, 50.25-32. On the formation of the *thema* Peloponnesus see Tibor Živković, "The Date of the Creation of the Theme of Peloponnese", *Byzantina Symmeikta* 13 (1999): 153-154.; Arnold J. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 261-262.; Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival 780-842* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 160.

12 The fact that this monk was able to go freely into the territory of the Slavs without any problems (Σκλαβενῶν μερῶν) indicates that this unnamed Macedonian sklavinia recognized the hegemony of the Byzantine emperor. For the journey of the monk Gregory in this unnamed Slavic area, see FGHB Tomus IV, 39.; FBHPJS Tomus I, 255. In order to suppress the rebellion, the emperor Theophilos (829-842) sent a strong army led by the military commander Alexios Mousele. See Panov, *Istorija*, 312.; Ivan Bozhilov i Vasil Giuzelev, *Istoriia na srednovekovna Bălgariia VII–XIV vek*, Tom I (Sofia: Anubis, 1999), 159. According to Constantine Porphyrogennetos*, The Book of Ceremonies,* tr. Ann Moffatt and Maxeme Tall (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 634-635, these Slavic rebellions were finally suppressed during the reign of Emperor Michael III. Florin Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages 500-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 154-156.

13 The military campaign conducted by the ruler of the Bulgars, Presian (836-852), against the Smolyans in 837 leads to the assumption that apparently this Sklavinia only nominally recognized the supreme authority of the Byzantine emperor. Their conquest by the Bulgars is confirmed by the inscription found near the city of Philippi. For this inscription see Iordan Ivanov, *Bălgarski starini iz Makedonia* (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1970), 1-10.

first half of the 9th century.[14] In fact, the reasons for their persistence can be located in several factors that strongly influenced Byzantine Balkan policy towards the middle of the 9th century: the military and political situation in the Balkans, in Southern Italy and in the Middle East; the Byzantine perception of the Sklaviniai as military opponents who, unlike the Arabs and Bulgars, were viewed as a secondary threat to its political goals by the imperial government;[15] as well the Byzantine military system, more precisely its internal structure, the billeting of military units across the themata, its logistics, but also the preparations for the upcoming military campaigns undertaken by the imperial army.[16]

Basically, the Byzantine military system was set up to act defensively. Although after its formation during the second half of the 7th century it was mostly successful in carrying out defensive tasks i.e., it managed to protect the remaining provinces in Asia Minor, Italy and the Balkans, nevertheless it could not respond well enough to the offensive needs of the Byzantine government aimed at reintegration of the former imperial territories. As a result of the constant lack of human and financial resources, the process of formation of a new *themata* in the Balkans was gradual. In the beginning, these were founded in the regions where the Byzantine Empire managed to maintain its authority i.e., in Thrace, around the city of Thessalonica, the area of Attica and parts of the Peloponnese.[17] Only in the end of 8th and the beginning of 9th century, after strengthening and increasing its military power, the Byzantine Empire managed to establish new *themata*, gradually including these Sklaviniai inside its own borders. However, despite the expansion of the *themata* throughout the Balkans i.e., the *themata* of Peloponnesus and

[14] About the military campaigns of the Byzantine emperor Constantine V see *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor, Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*, tr. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 595, 630-631. About the military skirmishes in the Peloponnese in *DAI*, 50.6-8.

[15] About the established Byzantine perception of the Slavs as a military force, from the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century see *The Taktika of Leo VI*, ed. and tr. George T. Dennis (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010), XVIII.93-101. For the continuity of this image see *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ein., ed. und in. George T. Dennis (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), XI.4. For Slavs as warriors see Dragan Gjalevski, "Pretstavata za Slovenite kako voini vo vizantiskite izvori (VI-X vek)", in *Zbornik na trudovi od Pettiot megjunaroden simpozium "Denovi na Justinijan I", Skopje, 17-18.11.2017*, ured. Mitko B. Panov (Skopje: Evro-Balkan, 2018), 59-66.

[16] For the principle of recruiting soldiers from several different *themata* for the upcoming military campaigns of the imperial army, see in more details in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 664-667, and *Theophanes*, 498-499, 511, 525, 617, 672.

[17] Until the end of the 8th century, only two *themata* existed on the territory of the Balkans: the first was Thrakia, founded in 680, and the second, Hellada, created at the end of the 7th century (687-695) in the area of Attica, part of Boeotia and the Peloponnese. For the establishment of the *thema* Thrakia, see Ralph J. Lilie, "Trakien" und "Thrakesion", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, herausgegeben von Herbert Hunger, 26. Band (Wien: Der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997), 28-34.; Treadgold, *History*, 329-330.; For the formation of the *thema* Hellada see Georgije Ostrogorski, *Iz vizantiske istorije i prosopografije* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1968), 142-143.; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 265-266.

Thessalonika,[18] the authority of the local *strategos* in keeping these Slavic regions submissive only with the help of arms and his own army forces proved to be insufficient. Commanding up to 2000 soldiers in his *themata*, the *strategos* could easily lose the territory that was under his control.[19] In such case, only an imperial army composed of soldiers from several Balkan *themata*, like the one commanded by the *protospatharios* Theoktistos and dispatched against the renegade Sklaviniai in the Peloponnese during the reign of Michael III (842-867),[20] would have had sufficient military power to re-establish the authority in that territory.

By the middle of the 9th century, the notion that the Byzantine authority extended throughout the entire territory of the Balkan Peninsula was only a memory of the past. Although in the last few decades of the 8th and first half of the 9th century, the Byzantines managed to reintegrate part of the once lost Balkan territories under their authority, nevertheless, most of it was beyond their reach. North of Adrianoupolis, the Bulgarian state was firmly established under its leader Krum and in the beginning of the second decade of the 9th century, it succeeded to restore its military power and reinforce its political position in the Balkans at the expense of the Byzantines. The rest of the Balkan Peninsula was under the rule of local Slavic rulers. Those located near Thessalonica and along the *via Egnatia* road, or rather on the territory of medieval Macedonia, accepted Byzantine hegemony, while the Slavs and their principalities located in the Balkans north of the Adriatic coast, the most important of which were Serbia and Croatia, were either independent from Byzantine authority or the Empire was still trying to effectuate some political influence.

[18] About the *thema* Peloponnesus see *DAI*, 49. See also Živković, "Theme of Peloponnese", 141-154.; On thema Thessalonika see Tibor Živković, "Uspenskij's Taktikon and the Theme of Dalmatia", *Byzantina Symmeikta* 17 (2005): 62, 85.; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 269.

[19] For the size of the Byzantine thematic armies in the 9th century, see Warren Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army 284-1081* (Stanford: University Press, 1995), 65-67, and Warren Treadgold, "Standardized numbers in the Byzantine Army", *War in History* 12 (2005): 10.

[20] According to the statement of Porphyrogennetos in *DAI*, 50.9-16, the Slavs from Peloponnese rebelled while Emperor Theophilos was still on the Byzantine throne. The Byzantine army led by Theoktistos was composed of soldiers from the *themata* Thrakia and Makedonia, but also from other western (Balkan) themata.

A fight for hegemony: The Balkans between Byzantine and Bulgarian aspirations

"And they used to say Symeon was half-Greek, on account of the fact that since his boyhood he had learned the rhetoric of Demosthenes and the logic of Aristotle in Byzantium"

Liudprand of Cremona, *Retribution,* III.29

Established in 680 in the regions between the Danube River and the Haimos mountain range, the Bulgar state was the only political entity that could threaten Byzantine imperial policy. During the middle of the 9th century, it became a powerful adversary to the Byzantines in their effort to impose hegemony over the Balkan territories. The rise of Bulgaria began immediately after the destruction of the Avar military power by the Frankish ruler Charlemagne (768-814), which led to complete disintegration of their state in Pannonia and expansion of the Bulgar territory up to the Tisza River.[21] With this expansion to the northwest, it was no longer just a regional power confined to the Balkan region, but grew into a state that could strongly influence and shape European politics. Growth of Bulgar power and their gradual leaning towards the West did not go unnoticed by the Byzantine government. This forced Emperor Nikephoros I to conduct a series of military expeditions aimed at stopping further Bulgar political and military strengthening. However, during the campaign of 811 Byzantine military power in the Balkan regions was seriously shaken after the catastrophic defeat of the imperial army by khan Krum, where most of the soldiers in this expedition along with the emperor were killed.

After several years of fierce Bulgar military activity throughout the territories of *themata* Makedonia and Thrakes, the Byzantine Empire managed to conclude a 30-year peace treaty with Omurtag (813-831). This treaty allowed the heavily devastated Thracian region to recover economically. At the same time, sources report that Byzantine influ-

[21] Robert Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria: A comparative study across the early medieval frontier* (London: Temple Smith, 1975), 48-49.; Jonathan Shepard, "Slavs and Bulgars", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. II c.700-c.900*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 233.

ence throughout Bulgaria increased significantly. The attempts of the Bulgars to write their own language in Hellenic alphabet, as well as their imitation of traditional Byzantine state terminologies, are evidence both of the attractiveness and of the strong influence that the Byzantine civilization had.[22] However, this did not mean that Omurtag and his successor Malamir (831–836) were tolerant to all aspects of the Byzantine civilization. They expressed extremely high impatience towards the Christian religion and its followers, who were becoming more and more numerous in the state not only as a result of incorporation of Byzantine territories in Thrace, but also because of the increasing acceptance of Christian faith by the local population in Bulgaria. The reason for such strong intolerance by both Omurtag and Malamir, which at times turned into fierce brutality, was the close connection that the Byzantine imperial ideology had with the Christian religion. This ideological connection questioned the loyalty of these people in the eyes of Bulgarian sovereigns. Therefore, they saw the increase of Christian subjects within Bulgaria as a danger to their power. Despite the occasional pogroms of Christians, which were probably exaggerated as a result of Byzantine propaganda, the Christian element, against all the obstacles and difficulties, nevertheless, managed to consolidate and impose its faith not only on the ordinary people, but also on the members of the ruling elite: Boyars, Slavic leaders and other important persons. The large number of Bulgar and Slavic names among Christians who, according to the biographies of this period, gave their lives in the name of the faith are evidence of this.[23]

During 836 the Byzantine-Bulgar peace treaty concluded under Omurtag was annulled, and the hostilities between these two Balkan powers resumed. The Bulgar attacks were aimed at the cities of Adrianoupolis, Serdica, Philippoupolis and Philippi, but also towards Serbia. Presence of a Bulgar army led by the *kavkhan* Isbul was recorded during 837 through the eastern regions of medieval Macedonia, where few years earlier the Byzantine Empire, probably, managed to impose its authority on the local Slavs.[24] These Bulgar conquests in the Balkans took place at the same time when new Arab campaigns started on the eastern border of the Byzantine Empire, the most disastrous of which was the conquest and destruction of Amorium, the home city of Emperor Theophilos and the reigning dynasty.[25]

[22] Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 153-156.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 154, 161-162. For more details about the reign of Omurtag see Panos Sophoulis, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 775-831 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 287-310.

[23] Sources report that Malamir had to execute his own brother Enravota as a result of his baptism by a Byzantine captive from Adrianopolis. See Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 83.; Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 147, 157.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 153-154. That the Bulgar brutality towards the Christians was, in fact, a sort of Byzantine propaganda, see Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 281.

[24] According to Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 165-166, Theophilos asked Presianos for military assistance in the fight against the Smolyans, probably as a result of the truce concluded between them.

[25] Walter E. Kaegi, "Confronting Islam: Emperors vs Caliphs (640-c.850)", in *The Cambridge History of the*

Unable to oppose the Bulgars as long as the bulk of the army was engaged in the East against the Arabs, in order to improve the security in Thrace and prevent further Bulgar military aggression, the Byzantine government in the reign of Theodora, mother and regent of Emperor Michael III, son of Theophilos, stationed additional military forces throughout these regions. They had the assignment not only to prevent and intercept the Bulgar units that were sent to raid and plunder, but also to attack their border fortresses.[26]

The Byzantine Empire, Boris and the shaping of a new Christian state in the Balkans

In the middle of the 9th century, Byzantine-Bulgar relations were burdened with the same problems from the past. According to the Byzantine perception, the Bulgars were seen as barbarians and pagans, an inferior race that lived in perpetual darkness and lawlessness, whose migration and settlement in the Balkans, but also their independence, was presented as a rebellion against the authority of the emperor. The Byzantine Empire considered the Bulgar state a legitimate target due to the fact that its territory had previously been under its administration and which, according to Byzantine belief, was only temporarily beyond the reach of its real sovereign, the emperor in Constantinople.[27] This allowed the Byzantine government to justify its political intentions for conquest as legitimate, and present Bulgaria as a region whose independence was of a temporary nature, a state that had to be destroyed or at least subordinated to the will of the Byzantine emperor. Theophanes Confessor reports that the Bulgar elite was very well

Byzantine Empire, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 391-392.

[26] About the skirmishes in the region of Thrace in 847 after the death of Patriarch Methodius see Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, ed. Immanuelis Bekkeri (Bonnae, 1862), 235.3-10. T*heophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus,* ed. Immanuelis Bekkeri (Bonnae, 1838), 657.7-11, differs only in the wrong dating of the death of Patriarch Methodius, in the eleventh year of the reign of Michael III. The remining of his report is identical. The fact that these skirmishes took place along the entire length of the border is noted by the author of the Life of Methodius (*Dokumenti za borbata na makedonskiot narod za samostojnost i za nacionalna država*, Tom prvi, ured. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: Kultura, 1981), 66-67, according to whom, he became a monk "...after seeing many turmoils and uprisings in his life..." as a ruler of a Slavic principality in medieval Macedonia. About the activities of Methodius among the Macedonian Slavs see Dragan Gjalevski, "Sprečuvajki ja bugarskata ekspanzija – vizantiskata diplomatija sprema makedonskite sklavinii vo sredinata na IX vek", *Glasnik* 56, no.1-2 (2012): 41-56.

[27] Petăr Angelov, *Bălgarskata Srednovekovna diplomaciia* (Sofia: Dărzhavno izdatelstvo "Nauka i Izkustvo", 1988), 90.; Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 13-15.

aware of this Byzantine attitude towards Bulgaria.[28] However, apart from ideological, the Byzantine policy towards this Balkan neighbour also had its practical, both military and political, background. As a result of its close proximity to Constantinople and the military power it had, Bulgaria was a real threat for the Byzantine policy in the Balkans and for security of the imperial provinces.

In order to protect the Balkan dominions from Bulgar attacks during the intensified military operations against the Arabs[29], the regent Theodora in the name of her son and emperor Michael III was forced to undertake certain diplomatic measures during 852, i.e., to start peace negotiations with Boris (852-889), Presian's successor.[30] For this purpose, an embassy was sent to Bulgaria, which is most likely the same embassy documented in *Life of St. Evarest*. According to this source, this mission was led by a certain Bryennios.[31] The assumption that he and the *protospatharios* Theoktistos Bryennios who was sent in 842 to suppress the Slav rebellion in Peloponnese by Empress Theodora and was correspondingly appointed *strategos* of the eponymous *thema*, and from the middle of the 9th century was probably appointed as the first person of *thema* Dalmatia, are the same person is plausible and should not be so easily rejected.[32] His frequent engagement in state and military matters is actually an evidence of the great trust that the regent empress Theodora had in him and his abilities.

By 850s, Bulgaria grew into a significant political power in Europe. Immediately after his accession to the throne of Bulgaria, Boris continued the pro-Frankish policy established by his predecessors. During 852, he concluded a peace treaty with the Eastern Frankish kingdom, which actually signified the confirmation of the previously concluded

[28] *Theophanes*, 599, reports that during the second half of the 8th century the Bulgar ruler Sabinos tried to make peace with the Byzantine Empire. The Bulgars publicly conveyed their displeasure to him, pointing out that "...on your account Bulgaria is about to be enslaved by the Romans".

[29] For the Byzantine campaign on the eastern frontier during the sole reign of Michael III, see Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, tr. Anthony Kaldellis (Canberra: AABS, 1998), IV.13-15.

[30] At the time when Boris ascended to the throne, the Byzantine-Bulgar relations were apparently strained because the *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati. Nomine fertur Libri I-IV*, tr. Michael Featherstone and Juan S. Codoñer (Boston/Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), IV.13.1-10, and John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811-1057*, tr. John Wortley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 90, report that, when "...Bogoris, the ruler of the Bulgars, heard that it was a woman, together with a tender child, who was ruling the Romans, he became insolent. He sent messengers to the imperial city threatening to break the treaties and to attack the Romans' territory".

[31] *For Life of St. Evarest* see *FGHB* Tomus IV, 315.

[32] For the task that the *protospatharios* Theoktistos Bryennios had in the Peloponnese see *DAI*, 50.10-11. The possibility that there were two members of the Bryennios family in the higher echelons of the imperial government in the middle of the 9th century, is not likely. About the sources that indicate that Bryennios from the life of Evarest and the *protospatharios* Theoktistos Bryennios are actually one and the same person see Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio, Vol. II, Commentary,* ed. Romilly H. J. Jenkins (London: The Athlone Press, 1962), 186.

agreements.[33] Secured on their north-western and southern borders, the Bulgars were free to intervene militarily in 853 not only in Pannonia, but also in the southwestern regions of the Balkan Peninsula.[34] As a response to the Bulgar conquests, the Byzantine government after the victory over the Arabs in 855, conducted a more extensive military campaign against Bulgaria, reintegrating the Thracian cities of Philippoupolis, Develtos, Anchialos and Mesembria, as well as the region or Zagora. Powerless to oppose the Byzantine army, Boris most likely agreed to honour the truce he had signed only four years earlier. The Bulgar delegation which was sent to Constantinople in 860 is evidence of that.[35] Although Boris' western campaign was unsuccessful and the conquest of the Balkan regions to which the imperial government laid claims caused a Byzantine military reaction which ended with the honouring of the previously concluded truce, nevertheless these military campaigns presented the Bulgar ruler as a significant figure on the European political scene and as an obstacle to the interests of the Eastern Frankish kingdom and the Byzantine Empire.

During 862 Boris confirmed his alliance with Ludwig the German, after which, rumours about the possibility of accepting Christianity had begun.[36] The change that appeared in the Bulgar policy towards Christianity during the reign of Boris is actually a result of both external and internal factors.[37] The only way through which Bulgaria could enter and become part of the European civilization, while at the same time receiving international recognition as an independent state, was if Boris accepted Christianity as an official state religion.[38] The fact that Christianity and its ideology had already deeply

[33] The first treaty between Bulgaria and the Eastern Frankish Kingdom was concluded in the third decade of the 9th century, and was then renewed in 845. See Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 169.; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 144.

[34] Shepard, "Slavs and Bulgars", 238-239. During these few years, the Bulgarian khan probably managed to finally conquer and subjugate the Slavs west of the rivers Struma and Bregalnitza all the way to the Adriatic coast in Albania. See Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 168.

[35] Alexander A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes, Tome I: La dynastie d'Amorium (820–867),* ed. Henri Grégoire, Marius Canard (Bruxelles: G.P. Maisonneuve, 1935), 238.

[36] About the letter of Pope Nicholas mentioning Boris' desire to accept Christianity in *FLHB* Tomus II, 62. See also Vasil Zlatarski, *Istoriia na Bălgarskata dărzava prez srednite vekove, Tom I, Chast 2. Treto fototipno izdanie* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo "Zaharii Stoianov", 2007), 16-17.; Jonathan Shepard, "Spreading the word: Byzantine missions", in *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 233.; Alexis P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 158.

[37] Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Bulgarian-Byzantine wars for Early Medieval Balkan Hegemony. Silver-Lined Skulls and Blinded Armies* (Pennsylvania: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 133-134.

[38] Angelov, *Bălgarskata Srednovekovna diplomaciia*, 88-89. That the entry of Bulgaria into this group of states was possible only through the acceptance of Christianity as state religion is also evidenced by the pope of Rome, Nicholas I himself (*FLHB* Tomus II, 114-115). In his answers to the questions sent by Boris, the ruler of the Bulgars, after his baptism, he points out that the pagan countries did not have the same rights in international relations as the Christian "civilized" states i.e., that these were objects of conquest whose

penetrated all segments of Bulgar society and had a strong influence not only among the population, but also among the ruling elite, even before Boris's public declaration in 862, is evidenced by the use of the term "ruler by God's authority" in the official title of the Bulgar khan since the time of Omurtag.[39] However, it is much more important to note that by the middle of the 9th century there was a change in the international position of Bulgaria. Finding himself between two powerful Christian states, the Eastern Frankish Kingdom and the Byzantine Empire, Boris had to place his political relations with these two European powers on a firmer footing. The Bulgar position became even more complicated after the decision of the Moravian prince Rostislav to ask Constantinople for missionaries who could speak the Slavic language, probably as a reaction to the more increasing Frankish imperialism and the previously concluded German-Bulgar alliance. As a response to Rostislav's request for an agreement and closer political relations, as well as to the given opportunity of exerting pressure on both the Papacy and the Bulgarian state, in 863 Emperor Michael III sent the two brothers from Thessalonica, Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, on a mission to Moravia where they arrived safely during the fall of the same year.[40]

Preoccupied on the eastern border with the Arab attacks, the Byzantine Empire could not prevent this approach of Bulgaria toward the West which was perceived as a danger to its interests in the Balkans.[41] However, after a crucial victory against the Arabs at Poson in 863, where the imperial army defeated and killed the *emir* of Melitene, the leader of one of the two Arab bases from which the jihad was waged, the Byzantines were able to turn their full attention to The Balkans.[42] In an attempt to stop the implementation of the agreement concluded between Bulgaria and the Eastern Frankish king-

signed treaties were allowed to be freely violated. The pope of Rome further points out that if some Christian rulers concluded a treaty with the infidels, they did so only when they wanted to convert a pagan ally, but also because in this way "...they imposed [to the pagans] various taxes and received from them land and slaves".

39 Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 82.

40 For the mission of Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, see Francis Dvornik, "The Significance of the missions of Cyril and Methodius", *Slavic Review* 23, no.2 (1964): 195-211.; Ihor Ševčenko, "Three paradoxes of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission", *Slavic Review* 23, no.2 (1964): 220-236.; Obolensky, T*he Byzantine Commonwealth*, 137-141.; Sergey A. Ivanov, "Religious missions", in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500-1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 316-317.

41 The baptism of Bulgar subjects by the Frankish priests would only further strengthen the political alliance concluded between Boris and Louis the German (843-876). Also, through this act, a Frankish ecclesiastical organization could be created in the Balkan territories, which would then allow free expansion of the Latin influence in these areas, something that the Byzantine Empire could not allow at a time when there was a dispute between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and The Roman papacy over the primacy in Christendom and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Balkan Peninsula. For more details see Shepard, "Spreading the word", 233-234.

42 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 179.13-184.12, and Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 100-101.

dom, as well as the dissemination of influence from the Roman Church, during the same year the Byzantine government carried out a more extensive military campaign by land and sea against the Bulgar state, which immediately produced results. Powerless to oppose the Byzantine army, the Bulgar khan decided to conclude a "long"peace. Immediately after the signing of this peace treaty, in 864 or 865, the Bulgars officially accepted Christianity from Constantinople, and during his baptism Boris took the name of his godfather - the Byzantine emperor Michael III.[43]

The ratification of the peace treaty and the acceptance of Christianity as official state religion radically changed the existing Byzantine-Bulgar relations. This made a significant change in the way the Byzantine policy acted towards Bulgaria, which was aimed at the submission of this state under the authority of the emperor in Constantinople. In fact, through the process of Christianization, Bulgaria's position in relation to other European states also changed. They were no longer seen as pagans, but as mentioned by Leon VI in his *Taktika*, they became "brothers in faith" with the Byzantines.[44]

However, the problematic attitude of the Byzantine clergy towards the Bulgarian population,[45] as well the refusal of the imperial government to permit establishment of an autocephalous Bulgarian church, forced Boris to turn to Rome.[46] A swift military action without a just cause was out of the question in this case for several reasons. The Bulgarians were now part of Christian Europe, and at the moment had firm diplomatic ties with the Roman Papacy and the Eastern Frankish Kingdom. An unprovoked military campaign against Bulgaria could probably lead to Western European involvement in a possible future conflict. Also, according to the Byzantine ideology of the imperial cult, the Byzantine emperor was a guardian to, and first among all Christians, including the Bulgarians, so waging war against them without some solid ideological reason would have been a bad political move. Theophanes Continuatus, as well as Georgius Monachus Continuatus, give an account about the acceptance of this political propaganda by the Byzantine society and their understanding of the surrounding world according to which, by becoming Christians, the Bulgars in fact, "...subjugated to the Byzantine emperor and

[43] About the Byzantine expedition in 863 and the baptism of the Bulgars see *Genesios*, IV.16.; *Leo Grammaticus*, 238.10-19. This campaign is also witnessed by *Symeon Magister*, 665.11-666.7. Unlike them *Theophanis Continuati*, IV.25.1-86, and Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 90-91, give several different versions about the baptism of Boris. For the territorial concessions see Hupchick, *The Bulgarian-Byzantine wars*, 136.

[44] *Taktika*, XVIII.42.

[45] For a general conclusion about the attitude of the Byzantine clergy in Bulgaria in Hupchick, *The Bulgarian-Byzantine wars*, 136-137.

[46] More details about Boris' relations with Rome in this period in *FLHB* Tomus II, 184-187. See also Liliana Simeonova, *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross. Photios, Bulgaria and the Papacy, 860s – 880s* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1998), 175-198.; Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 177-183.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 169-173.

Romans".[47] The existence of this propaganda even outside Byzantine borders is confirmed by the pope of Rome, Nicholas I (858-867), who in a letter to Hincmar, the archbishop of Reims, indicated that "...[the Byzantines] wanted to subjugate [the Bulgarians] to their authority through the Christian religion".[48]

The Byzantine reaction was swift. In the spring of 867, after the course of action was approved by the Byzantine emperor Basileios I (867-886), Patriarch Photios sent a letter to the rest of the Eastern Churches explaining to their leaders the recent events in Bulgaria. Simultaneously to this correspondence of Photios, the Byzantine government started an intense diplomatic activity at the Bulgarian court. This measure is more attested by the Latin, than by the Byzantine authors. Anastasius Bibliothecarius points out that the Byzantines "...out of envy and thirst for such glory, in order to be able to remove him [Prince Boris] from the Roman throne, send him numerous presents and very often present him with sophistic arguments".[49] Byzantine diplomacy in Bulgaria is also witnessed in the letter that pope Nicholas I sent to Hincmar, the archbishop of Reims, were he states that the Byzantine emperors "...Michael and Basileios...wanted and tried excessively to separate the Bulgarians from the submission to the blessed Peter and to subject them to their authority through Christian religion, telling such [evil] things about the Holy Roman Church...so that they, being still new in the faith, hearing it [from the Byzantines]...[want] to torn away from us".[50] In his *Chronicle*, Theophanes Continuatus also indicates the diplomatic measures conducted by the Byzantine government. He states that "... by repeated exhortations, splendid receptions, and magnanimous munificence and donations, however, the emperor [Basileios I] persuaded the Bulgars to accept an archbishop, and to allow their country to be covered with a network of bishoprics".[51] The local church council of 869-870 which was held in Constantinople represented a significant diplomatic success for Byzantine Balkan policy. The sources report that the now deposed patriarch Photios, as well as his successor Ignatios, succeeded in winning over the heads of the Eastern Churches, which was not a difficult task since these churches saw the Byzantine Empire as the only political entity that could exert influence over the Arabs in order to protect their interests.[52]

---

47 *Theophanis Continuati*, IV.15.30-34.; For Georgius Monachus Continuatus in *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae* Tomus VI, ed. Vasilka Tărpkova, Mihail Voinov et al. (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1964), 137.

48 *FLHB* Tomus II, 63.

49 *Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, Patrologiae curcus completus, Series Latina, Tomus CXXIX, ed. Jacques P. Migne (Paris, 1853), Col. 20 B.

50 *FLHB* Tomus II, 63.

51 *Chronographiae Quae Theophanis Continuati. Nomine Fertur Liber Quo. Vita Basilii Imperatoris Amplectitur*, ed. Ihor Ševcenko (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 96.6-9.

52 For the arrival of the Bulgar delegation in Constantinople in the last days of the church council, as well for

The first visible result of these diplomatic steps of the Byzantine government is the "long" peace that was re-established between the Empire and the Bulgarian state concluded few years earlier.[53] The sources testify that immediately after the end of the church council, the Byzantine government began to create a church organization in Bulgaria "through priests and other imperial agents". Theophanes Continuatus reports that "...owing to these prelates and also to devout monks whom the emperor summoned from the mountains and dens of the earth and dispatched to that land, [the Bulgars] abandoned their ancestral customs and became, one and for all, captives of Christ".[54] It seems that immediately after his appointment in Constantinople, the new Bulgarian archbishop arrived in Pliska together with the first bishops. With the establishment of the church organization and the arrival of clergy whose native language was medieval (romaika) Hellenic, the smooth dissemination of Byzantine culture and influence throughout Bulgaria began. Several bishoprics were established, with its centres in Belgrade, Bregalnitza, Cherven, Devol, Dristra, Moravsk, Ohrid, Filippopolis, Probaton and Serdica. According to the sources, a large number of churches were built, some of which being personal endowments of the Bulgarian *knyaz* Boris.[55] A large number of young Bulgars who were destined for high positions in the Bulgarian church were sent to Constantinople where they were directed towards the monastic life and received an appropriate education. After their return in the homeland, through communication and passing on the experiences they gained in the imperial city to the local population, the Byzantine civilization and all the other cultural aspects that arose from it, strengthened and consolidated in Bulgaria further more. Simeon, the son of Boris, who would later play a major role in the struggle between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria over the hegemony of the Balkan territories, was also Part of this group of young people.[56]

By means of such diplomatic measures, the Byzantine Empire managed to bring under its political and cultural influence a significant part of the Balkan Peninsula, without taking any military actions. Subjects to the spiritual leadership of the patriarch of Constantinople and submissive to advice of the Byzantine emperor, the people who ac-

the course of its additional session, see in the *life* of Hadrian in *Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, Col. 1391-1396. For a detailed analysis of the church council in Constantinople with a special emphasis on the Bulgarian question see Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, 263-270.; Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 132-143.

53 Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 152.

54 *Vita Basilii Imperatoris*, 96.8-13.

55 Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 185-186.; Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 284. About the established bishoprics see Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 129. For the construction of large number of churches by Boris, see *Theophylacti Bulgariae Archiepiscopi*, Patrologiae curcus completus, Series Graeca, Tomus CXXVI, ed. Jacques P. Migne (Paris, 1864), 189.B, 200.C-D, 205.B. Also, Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 207-214.

56 Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 231-232.

cording to the conviction of the Byzantines, represented an integral part of their *oecumene* (οἰκουμένη) – the Bulgarians, were not seen as a military and political threat to their imperial policy until the reign of Simeon (893-927).[57] The extent of the Byzantine influence in Bulgaria can be seen not only from the sigillographic sources from the time of Simeon which testify that until the end of 924 the seals of the Bulgarian rulers were written in Hellenic letters, but also from the ceremonial greeting to the Bulgarian knyaz by his guard in medieval (romaika) Hellenic language, clearly attested in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes Continuatus.[58] This "long" peace which existed on the Balkans allowed the Byzantine government to wage war against the Arabs in Sicily, in Southern Italy and on the Adriatic Sea, or on the eastern border during the last decades of the 9th century, where after a long and protracted warfare the Byzantine army managed to finally defeat and completely destroy the military power of the Paulicians and their Arab allies.[59]

Simeon and the struggle for hegemony in the Balkans

The Byzantine-Bulgarian relations continued to develop in the same friendly direction even after the death of Basileios I. The peace that was concluded between these two states in 864 was also confirmed by his son and successor, Leon VI. From a political and diplomatic aspect, Bulgaria was an integral part of the Byzantine *oecumene*, highly positioned, which can be easily noticed in the receptions held in the Great Palace.[60] It remained unchanged even after the turmoil which occurred during the short reign of Vladimir-Rasate and ended with his dethronement and blinding, and the acclamation of Simeon, the youngest son of Boris, as a new Bulgarian *knyaz*.[61]

The Byzantine government was probably extremely satisfied with the appointment of Simeon as a new Bulgarian ruler. Educated in Constantinople, amazed, it seems, by the Byzantine civilization and its ideology,[62] his rise to power was seen as a kind of

[57] *Taktika*, XVIII.42.

[58] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 407.15-16, testifies that during the meeting with Romanos I Lekapenos, Simeon's guards greeted him in "Roman" language.

[59] About the military campaigns during the reign of Emperor Basileios I see Treadgold, *History,* 456-461.; Romilly H. J. Jenkins, *Byzantium: The imperial Centuries AD 610-1071* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 186-192.

[60] *Cletorologion* of Philotheus in Nicolas Oikonomides, *Les Listes De Préséance Byzantines des IX et XI Siécles* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1972), 162-165, 167-169, 203, and *The Book of Ceremonies*, 681, unequivocally point to that fact.

[61] Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 222-227.; Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 278-282.; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 56-57.

[62] *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*, tr. Paolo Squartiti (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 124. See also Ivan Bozhilov, *Car Simeon Veliki (893-927): Zlatniiat vek na Srednovekov-*

natural continuation of the Bulgarian policy of peaceful coexistence established by his father several decades earlier. Perceived by the Byzantines as a half-Byzantine (ἡμίαργος), the new leader of the Bulgarian state was apparently also perceived as a political figure over which, according to their belief, they could have considerable influence.[63] But in 894, just one year after his accession on the Bulgarian throne, Simeon entered Thrace, inflicting a heavy defeat on the Byzantine military forces responsible for the security of these regions.[64]

The reason why there was a radical change in Byzantine-Bulgarian relations and violation of the existing peace treaty, which led to a long-term war, is located in the absence of a clear foreign policy from the reigning emperor Leon VI, according to the scholars.[65] However, the making of wrong political moves is not evidence that there was a lack of foreign policy. As a result of its subjective perception of superiority, based on the political right to the Roman heritage, as well on the imperial ideology from which the idea of the divine predestination of the emperor for universal supremacy and dominance over Christendom arose, the Byzantine Empire did not accept other political entities, in this case Bulgaria, as equal partners. These Byzantine political and ideological convictions were further reinforced if these states were part of the Christian world, or were baptized by the hand of the patriarch of Constantinople. Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos clearly states this Byzantine position in his letters to Simeon.[66]

The diplomatic measures that were implemented by the Byzantine Empire towards Simeon during 894 should be observed in the context of fixed relations which, according to the Byzantine perception, could only exist between a sovereign with a divine right for supreme power and a subordinate prince. Since Simeon was educated in Constantinople and, it seems, did admired the Byzantine civilization, the imperial government assumed that in his person they found their protégé and henchman, a ruler who understood and accepted the Byzantine ideology, and thus the role of *archon* (ἄρχων) that was entrusted to

na Bălgariia (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Otecestveniia Front, 1983), 34-36.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 103-105.

63 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 124. See also Jonathan Shepard, "Manners maketh Romans? Young barbarians at the emperor's court", in *Byzantine style, Religion and Civilization*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 135-138, 141-145.; Shaun Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912): Politics and People* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 173.

64 Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije*, 248-249.; Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 286.

65 Treadgold, *History*, 463.; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 57.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 105.

66 Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letters*, ed. and tr. by Leendert G. Westerink and Romilly J. H. Jenkins (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1973), 8.47-48, 27.72-74. See in Mihail Voinov, "Promianata v Bălgarovizantiiskite otnosheniia pri car Simeon", *Izvestiia na Instituta za Istoriia* Tom 18 (1967): 158-159.

him,[67] a local prince subject to the will of the *basileus* (βασιλεύς). Instead, the Byzantine Empire found a strong opponent to its military and political ends in the Balkans in the new Bulgarian *knyaz*.

As a main reason for the deteriorating relations at the beginning of Simeon's reign, Theophanes Continuatus and Leo Grammaticus point to the transfer of the Bulgarian centre of trade from Constantinople to the city of Thessalonica.[68] Although the cause of the war is located in the economic measures that were undertaken by the Byzantine officials, it should be noted that the new Bulgarian ruler probably had no intention to calm the situation. Educated in Constantinople and placed on the throne after the forced abdication of Vladimir, Simeon was, probably, perceived as a henchman of the Byzantine emperor by the Bulgarian boyars. Therefore, the rejection of the accusations by Leon VI was a sufficient justification for the new Bulgarian *knyaz* to start a war that would strengthen and improve his own reputation, as well as that of his state, and would demonstrate to his associates that he was not a protégé of the Byzantine emperor. This is reported by Skylitzes, according to whom Simeon, "...ruler of the Bulgars, found [in the transfer of the trade to Thessalonica] the following pretext for breaking off his treaty with the Romans, as he wished to do".[69]

The Byzantine Empire was not ready to go to war with Bulgaria. Judging by the way in which the army assigned to meet Simeon was mobilized, it can be concluded that the imperial government did not even expect it.[70] In fact, during this period most of its military forces were fighting on other fronts.[71] The defeat that followed was a serious blow to the Byzantine prestige and reputation, which was further shaken by Simeon's decision to cut off the noses of the captured Khazars, members of the imperial guard, and send them mutilated back to their emperor in Constantinople.[72] Embarrassed by the defeat and publicly humiliated, Leon VI began preparations for an extensive military campaign

[67] According to *The Book of Ceremonies*, 681, 690, at the time when Konstantinos VII and Romanos were on the throne, Simeon was named *archon* of Bulgaria.

[68] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 357.12-359.16. Cf. *Leo Grammaticus*, 266.18-267.8. For Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 282-283, the transfer of the Bulgarian trade represented a political response to the Byzantine policy, a diplomatic countermeasure directed against the process which took place in Bulgaria i.e., the liberation of the Bulgarian archdiocese from the influence of the patriarch of Constantinople through the use of Slavic script and language in the liturgical service of the church. Unlike him, Paul Magdalino, "St Demetrios and Leo VI", *ByzantinoSlavica* 51, no.2 (1990): 198-201, indicates that the transfer of trade to the city of Thessalonica was an internal economic measure through which the emperor wanted to support the cult of St. Demetrius. According to Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 286, this move of the Byzantine government was only a pretext for Simeon's campaign.

[69] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 169. For Simeon's expectations see Tougher, *Reign of Leo VI*, 174.

[70] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 170.

[71] Treadgold, *History*, 463.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 106.

[72] T*heophanes Continuatus*, 358.5-7.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 170.

against Bulgaria, which represents a typical example of how the Byzantines in the late 9th and early 10th centuries used their diplomacy to achieve certain military goals.

The Author of the military manual *On Strategy* points out that when the Byzantine Empire was "...unable to face [the enemy] in open battle...", in order to improve its position, the government should "...stir up neighboring peoples [to wage war] against them".[73] This diplomatic measure of opening a second front against the enemy and allowing the allies to fight instead is explicitly attested in the sources that report on Leon's preparations for the upcoming Bulgarian campaign. For that purpose, "...the emperor sent the patrician Niketas Skleros across the Danube to persuade the Turks and Hungarians (as they are called) to cross the river and to devastate Bulgaria as best they could".[74] The decision to appoint Niketas for this diplomatic mission proved to be correct as the sources inform that the Byzantine envoy succeeded in his task of winning over the Magyar leaders Arpad and Kurszan.[75]

Byzantine diplomatic activity did not end there. Theophanes Continuatus reports that at the same time when the Byzantine expeditionary army was approaching the Bulgarian border the emperor sent quaestor Konstantiniakos to Simeon "...still hoping for peace and wanting to conclude a treaty with him".[76] Suspicious of his true intentions, the Bulgarian *knyaz* deprived the Byzantine envoy of his freedom.[77] The steps taken by Simeon towards the *quaestor* lead to the assumption that he was probably familiar with the Byzantine method of gathering intelligence, but also with the military tactics of opening a second front on the Danube with the help of the fleet, used relatively successfully against Bulgaria in the past. However, his focus to the south towards the land army indicates that he apparently did not expect the Magyars to be an integral part of the Byzantine forces that were to attack from the north. Although filing to give the desired results, this diplomatic mission of the *quaestor* Konstantiniakos nevertheless succeeded in deceiving Simeon, who remained unaware of the Byzantine alliance with the Magyars. After the transfer of the Magyar army across the Danube by the imperial fleet, in the area of Dobruja, in the ensuing battles the Bulgarians were defeated several times by the new Byzantine allies. With the Magyars moving freely throughout the Bulgarian territory, plundering and ravaging along the way, and with the Byzantine army and fleet stationed

[73] On Strategy, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and tr. George T. Dennis (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 6.14-17.

[74] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 170-171.; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 358.7-10.

[75] *Leo Grammaticus*, 267.15-21.

[76] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 358.16-20.

[77] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 171.; *Leo Grammaticus*, 268.2-6.; Ioannis Zonarae, *Epitome Historiarum* Vol. IV, ed. Ludovicus Dindorfius (Bonnae, 1871), 40.19-22, notes that the *quaestor* was not only imprisoned, but also chained.

on its borders, the emperor won an exceptional victory without shedding a single drop of Byzantine blood. Hard-pressed in the city of Dorostolon, the Bulgarian *knyaz* agreed to conclude a truce.[78] As a sign of goodwill and evidence of his sincere intentions, he apparently agreed for an exchange of prisoners.[79]

After the plea for peace from Simeon, the Byzantine Empire immediately ceased hostilities and sent *magistros* Leon Choerosphactès to negotiate and conclude a treaty. A number of letters i.e., diplomatic correspondence, sent between the Byzantine envoy and the Bulgarian ruler have been preserved from this Byzantine-Bulgarian negotiations. It can be noted from this exchange that the negotiations started extremely badly for the Byzantines. After the decision to withdraw the military forces from the Bulgarian borders, most probably a command given personally by the *domestikos ton scholon* Nikephoros Phokas and *droungarios* Eustathios,[80] the Byzantine envoy lost the superior negotiating position and gave Simeon enough space to implement a policy that would improve his chances in the upcoming diplomatic negotiations. Imprisoned on the order from Simeon upon his arrival in Bulgaria, *magistros* Leon Choerosphactès found himself in a subordinate position, powerless to dictate the terms in the negotiations that followed.

Freed from the military pressure in the north after the victory over the Magyars, Simeon began dictating the terms of the negotiations from a superior position. According to the sources, he informed the Byzantine emperor through the imprisoned Choerosphactès that "...he would not make peace until the Bulgar prisoners had been returned".[81] Since with the defeat of the Magyars, the Byzantine military pressure no longer existed, and with it the advantage in the official negotiations, Leon VI agreed to hand over the captives. For this purpose, *magistros* Leon Choerosphactès and the Bulgarian envoy Theodore arrived in Constantinople. However, that did not lead to peace in the Balkans. Under the pretext that not all Bulgarian captives were handed over, Simeon started a new campaign in 896. Militarily prepared, with detachments from the eastern *themata* and *tagmata*, the Byzantines met the Bulgarian army near the city of Boulgarophygon. However, in the ensuing battle the Byzantine army was totally defeated and suffered heavy losses.[82]

The negotiations that followed, conducted between Simeon and Leon Choerosphactès, eventually ended with the signing of a peace treaty. Confirmation that an armi-

[78] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 358.20-359.2. Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 171. *Leo Grammaticus*, 268.6-14. For this Byzantine military tactic, see *Taktika*, XVIII.40.

[79] According to Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 300-302, 306-308, the negotiations were most likely conducted verbally and without any signed document.

[80] *Leo Grammaticus*, 268.17-18.

[81] For Simeon's military campaign against the Magyars, see *Theophanes Continuatus*, 359.15-16.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 171-172.

[82] For Boulgarophygon see *Theophanes Continuatus*, 360.11-14.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 172-173.

stice and a treaty was reached is the statement given by Leo Grammaticus who notes that Simeon, "...the ruler of Bulgaria, sent envoys to [Emperor] Alexandros to mention to him about the peace".[83] Pseudo-Symeon also informs about this and indicates that Simeon "... proposed peace to Alexandros, promising him that he would be favourably disposed and respect him as it was in the time of the emperor Leon".[84] In his work, Skylitzes presents another detail about the peace treaty agreed after the catastrophic defeat at Boulgarophygon. He notes that Simeon "...sent a delegation to enquire whether he [Emperor Alexandros] would maintain the peace and continue to pay the subsidy which his brother, the former emperor, had paid".[85]

The *Cletorologion* of Philotheos, composed probably at the end of 899, informs that after the peace treaty the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations were formal and peaceful, and the Bulgarian envoys had a prominent place in the imperial ceremonies held in the Great Palace.[86] Militarily crippled after the several defeats by Simeon, but also actively engaged on the eastern border, the Byzantine Empire was prevented from defending its interests in the Balkans with the help of military forces. Unable to intervene militarily if there was a need for it, the Byzantine government resorted to diplomatic measures. In a letter sent to the emperor Leon VI, Leon Choerosphactès reports that after the treaty he was able to restore to Byzantine rule "...thirty fortresses in the district of Dyrrachion together with all their wealth and population".[87] He indicates that during 904 the Byzantine Empire once again used the diplomatic means that it had at disposal. In an attempt to prevent further escalation of the situation in the Balkans, as well as a new military conflict with the Bulgarians who "...wanted to settle in the [city] of Thessalonica taken over by the Hagarenes...",[88] the Byzantine government once again sent Leon Choerosphactès on a diplomatic mission to the Bulgarian court. According to his testimonials, in the negotiations that followed he succeeded to reach an agreement and persuade Simeon, by gifts and a large quantity of gold, to abandon his intention of conquering this city by military means.[89]

---

83 *Leo Grammaticus*, 287.18-20.

84 *Symeon Magister,* 717.13-18.

85 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 190.

86 According to the preserved protocols in this manuscript, during the imperial receptions held in the Great Palace, the Bulgarian envoys were named as friends and received significant privileges. For more details see Oikonomides, *Les Listes*, 166-167, 180-181, 206-209.

87 *Léon Choerosphactès, Magistre, Proconsul et Patrice. Biographie–Correspondance*, texte et traduction George Kolias (Athen: Byzantinisch – Neugriechische Jahrbuecher, 1939), 112.

88 Ibid, 112.

89 According to the *Vita* of Euthymius (*FGHB* Tomus IV, 318), the gold that was supposed to be handed over to the Bulgarians was given to Leon the Tripolitanian. For an analysis of the concluded agreement, see Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 339-342, and Hupchick, *The Bulgarian-Byzantine wars*, 166-167.

However, the peaceful coexistence in the Balkans soon came to an end. The new Byzantine emperor, Alexandros (912-913), had no intention of adhering to the treaty that had been made with Simeon a few years earlier. Probably led by the desire to gain as much popularity as possible among the Byzantines and to establish an image of a sovereign who did not yield to the demands of those who, according to ideological belief, were characterized as his subordinates, and at the same time eager to break any continuity that would connect him with the reign of his brother Leon VI, he took a firm stand against the Bulgarian *knyaz*. The sources report that the emperor "...shamefully sent the delegates away, uttering pompous, boasting and insolent phrases, making threats against Simeon under the impression that this would intimidate him".[90] According to the established medieval diplomatic norms, this behaviour towards foreign delegations was, in fact, a major political provocation.[91] The Byzantine emperor did not live enough to experience the consequences of his diplomatic blunder. He died during 913, and the resolution of the political crisis that arose in the Balkans was left to the new regency led by Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos.

The regency found itself in an unenviable situation from the very beginning. The Arabs were once again marauding throughout Asia Minor,[92] while in the imperial capital, immediately after the death of Alexander, the *domestikos* Konstantinos Doukas began a bid for his ascension on the Byzantine throne.[93] Under the pretext of violating the diplomatic principles of the now-deceased emperor Alexandros, but mainly because of his disregard for the concluded peace treaty, in 913 Simeon started to prepare for war against the Byzantine Empire, wanting, according to the Byzantine sources, to seize the imperial power for himself.[94] Since the main army forces were engaged on the eastern border in the fight against the Arabs, in an attempt to prevent this hostile intention of the Bulgarian ruler, the regency relied on its diplomatic means.

The war that began in 913 and lasted until Simeon's death in 927 represented a real challenge for the Byzantine diplomacy. The main sources through which its practical action can be observed first-hand are the large number of preserved letters that the Byzantine government from this period had sent to the Bulgarian *knyaz* and his associates.

90 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 190.; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 359.10-14.

91 According to the section *On Envoys* in On Strategy, 43.3-5, "...those [foreign envoys] who are sent to us should be received honorably and generously, for everyone holds envoys in esteem". However, it should be noted that this diplomatic principle was often violated. See Liliana Simeonova, "The Short Fuse: Examples of Diplomatic abuse in Byzantine and Bulgarian History", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 23 (1996): 57, 63-64.

92 Treadgold, *History of the Byzantine State*, 473.

93 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 191.; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 381.14-384.3.

94 For Simeon's intention see Nicholas, *Letters*, 5.194-196. According to the more extensive analysis of Jonathan Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria - Peacemaker", in *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Farnham: Ashgate Variorum, 2011), 2-53, Simeon had no intention of conquering Constantinople.

For the initial period, which lasted until 917, it refers to the correspondence of Nikolaos Mystikos, Patriarch of Constantinople. The first among these, sent in July 913 just before the beginning of the Bulgarian conflict,[95] indicates that the Byzantines were not only aware of the potential danger, but also very well informed of Simeon's intentions.[96] However, all efforts that were directed towards the Bulgarian ruler in order to convince him to stop the preparations for his upcoming military campaign, as well as Nikolaos Mystikos' desire for Simeon to become a Christian ruler who will be obedient to the advice of the emperor, and not a sovereign and a man who will implement tyranny,[97] remained unsuccessful. Indifferent to the pleas, petitions and threats based on the Christian ethics, Simeon persisted in his intention to start a war against the Byzantine Empire.

After the Byzantines realized that the Bulgarian *knyaz* had no intention of backing down, Nikolaos Mystikos reports that the imperial senate decided to send an official delegation to Bulgaria, in order to convey not only by letter, but also in person, the Byzantine commitment to peace. The regency and senate were actually trying to re-enact the previously agreed κομβέντον or settlement, on the basis of a previously signed treaty. This proposal was rejected and, probably seen as a kind of insult by Simeon, because through the Byzantine envoys he informed the regency in Constantinople that "...by shedding of blood..." he would get what he wanted.[98] In an attempt to *save the day* after the failed negotiations, Nikolaos Mystikos sent a new letter. It can be assumed that this was his personal initiative, since as the head of the regency of the minor emperor, and as a spiritual father of the Bulgarian ruler, he expected that his words would have, at least, some influence on Simeon.

The sources indicate that when he reached the walls of Constantinople, the Bulgarian *knyaz* "...withdrew to Hebdomon, requesting a peace treaty. The regents received his request favourably, whereupon Simeon despatched his own *magistros* Theodore to hold peace talks".[99] The outcome of these peace negotiations has been obscured by the deliberate alteration and reworking of this event by the Byzantine chroniclers. The only thing that can be concluded from these texts is that during the negotiations, Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos agreed to renew the tribute.[100] After the negotiations had ended, the sources

95 Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 107-108.

96 Nicholas, *Letters*, 5.32-121, himself points out that many people used to tell him about the real intention of the Bulgarian *knyaz* to attack the Byzantine Empire. See also Emil Alexandrov, "The Bulgarian-Byzantine treaty of 927 (International law analysis)", *Bulgarian Historical Review* 21, no.1 (1993): 45.

97 Nicholas, *Letters*, 5.18-19, 5.66-67. The Byzantines used the term tyranny to describe an illegal rebellion by a subject against his master. See Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 108-109.

98 Nicholas, *Letters*, 6.46-50.

99 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 385.13-15. Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 194. Cf. *Symeon Magister*, 721.10-17.

100 Voinov, "Promianata", 186-187.

inform that Nikolaos Mystikos met the Bulgarian *knyaz*, after which Simeon "...bowed his head before the patriarch who said a prayer over him and placed his own monastic cowl (ἐπιρριπτάριον) on the barbaric brow instead of a crown". Rewarded with precious gifts, "...although no peace treaty has been concluded, Simeon and his children returned to his own country, without agreeing to the peace that had been established".[101] However, in contrast to the texts of these Byzantine chroniclers, the information provided by the preserved letters of the patriarch, as well as by the archaeological findings, present a definite picture of the conditions under which this treaty was concluded. This source material suggest that in exchange for peace, the Byzantine regency seems to have granted Simeon the title of *basileus*[102] as a result of the fact that immediately after the negotiations he started using seals, dated to the second half of 913, which read Σιμεών Βασιλεύς, that is, εἰρηνοποιὸς Βασιλεύς.[103] Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that Simeon, who had received his education in Constantinople, was not familiar with the coronation ceremony which consisted of the placing of a crown on the head of the monarch and a public acclamation.[104] Apart from the crowning of Simeon as *basileus*, Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos indicates in his letters that the last of the peace terms that were agreed upon during the negotiations was probably the marriage between the young emperor Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos and one of Simeon's daughters. This marriage was probably requested by the Bulgarian ruler and promised by the regency.[105] Satisfied with the final outcome of negotiations, which seems to have been verbally concluded, before returning to his country the Bulgarian *knyaz* assured the Patriarch of his intentions to live in peace with the Byzantine Empire.[106]

---

101 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 385.18-25.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 194-195.

102 Nicholas, *Letters*, 8.63-87, in his letter to Simeon sent in 914, indirectly reprimands the Bulgarian *knyaz* for his dissatisfaction with the honour and the gift he received as a man, who by its nature was almost equal to the Byzantines. For the meeting at Hebdomon and the conferral of the title of Βασιλεύς see also Grigori Simeonov, "Topografiia i diplomaciia. Izboră na miasto za sreshtta pri bălgaro-vizantiiskite pregovori na visoko ravnishte prez VIII-X vek", in *Bălgarsko Carstvo. Sbornik v chest na 60-godishninata na doc. d-r Georgi N. Nikolov*, red. Angel Nikolov (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2018), 347-356.

103 About Simeon's seals on which the title of *basileus* and *basileus peacemaker* are noted see Ivan Jordanov, *Corpus of the Medieval Bulgarian Seals*, ed. Pavel Georgiev (Sofia: BAS, 2016), 66-72. Also, Ivan Bozhilov, *Vizantiiskiiat Sviat* (Sofia: Anubis, 2008), 408.; Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 253-254.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 225.; Jonathan Shepard, "Bulgaria: the other Balkan empire", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. III c.900-c.1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 574.

104 Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria", 26-30.; Voinov, "Promianata", 187.

105 For this promise see Nicholas, *Letters*, 16.73-77.

106 In his letter Nicholas, *Letters*, 8.88-93, indicates to Simeon that he promised "...all that was peaceable, all that was of pure friendship; that henceforth all strife, every occasion of offence should be dissolved, every quarrel should cease, and, with God's help, a peace really stable between Romans and Bulgarians should be accorded, such as had never been before nor had been experienced by preceding generations".

These concessions to Simeon were significant, but it must be noted that similar cases were also undertaken in the past. The reason due to which the Patriarch had allowed this is a completely different matter. With the Bulgarian army camped at the gates of Constantinople, just days after the suppression of Konstantinos Doukas' rebellion, the regency led by Nikolaos Mystikos probably found itself in a delicate situation. Associated with the leader of the recent rebellion (he actually supported the action of Konstantinos Doukas before becoming regent of the young emperor),[107] the Patriarch's political position as the first person of the regency was not secure. Having found himself in such a situation, Simeon's request for negotiations (although he dictated the terms from a position of strength) apparently represented a good opportunity to conclude a peace treaty that would not only free the state from immediate military danger, but would also closely link Bulgaria's interests with those of the Byzantine Empire. With the conclusion of this treaty, it seems that Nikolaos Mystikos also assumed that this political move would significantly improve his personal position in the capital.

Unfortunately, the treaty did not last that long. The Patriarch overestimated his influence in Constantinople. The concessions he made in exchange for peace with Simeon were seen as a strong blow to the Byzantine prestige and "were greeted" with great dissatisfaction. He was soon replaced by Empress Zoe, mother of young Konstantinos VII, who immediately reversed the decisions and commitments made by the previous regency. This Byzantine violation of the treaty gave Simeon a solid excuse to intervene militarily in the regions of Thrace and ravage them, conquering the city of Adrianoupolis during this campaign.[108] It seems the Byzantines responded again with diplomatic measures to this Bulgarian attack, since that the written sources do not testify of any increased military activity on their part.[109] For the purpose of concluding a peace, the regency sent an embassy to Simeon led by *patrikios* Basileios and *protospatharios* Niketas Helladikos, both most likely permitted to give consent that at least part of the previously agreed decisions will be respected,[110] and that, in fact, referred to the confirmation of the title of *basileus* and the payment of tribute. Agreeing with these terms, Simeon stopped the hostilities and the treaty was again into force.

The preparations that were taken for the military campaign of 917 which aimed to completely destroy the Bulgarian state, but ultimately ended with a catastrophic defeat

[107] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 191.

[108] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 387.14-15. The attempt made by Nicholas, *Letters*, 8.124-127, to enforce the Bulgarian ruler Simeon to abandon the campaign was unsuccessful.

[109] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 387.14.-388.4, reports that the empress-regent Zoe sent an embassy to ransom the city of Adrianopolis. Nicholas, *Letters*, 8, letter to Simeon was probably sent in that context.

[110] Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 22.

of the Byzantine army at Acheloos near the homonymous river, are a typical example of the military application of Byzantine diplomacy.[111] It can be noted from the sources that it was a strictly planned military undertaking in which the diplomatic means played a significant role. According to these, in order to gain tactical and military advantage over the Bulgarians, the Byzantines used strategy identical to the one in 894. They sent the *strategos* of Cherson, Ioannes Bogas, to the Pechenegs in an attempt to win them over to their side in the fight against Simeon, in which he succeeded.[112]

The Byzantine diplomatic activity in the eve of this military campaign did not finish there. According to the author of *De Administrando Imperio*, before the battle at Acheloos, the Byzantine government sent a delegation to Petar, the archon of Serbia, which was led by the *strategos* of Dyrrachion. The purpose of this mission was to conclude a military alliance directed against Bulgaria, in which the Magyars were supposed to play an integral part. In order for the military campaign against Bulgaria to succeed, the regency needed peace with the Arabs on the eastern frontier. That would allow the Byzantine government to transfer detachments of the *themata* armies responsible for the security of Asia Minor to the Balkan regions. After the victory over the Arabs from Tarsus, Melitene and Samosata in 915, the Byzantines sent an embassy there which was supposed to reach a peace agreement from a position of strength. According to Theophanes Continuatus and John Skylitzes, due to the heavy defeat suffered two years ago, the Byzantine envoys were generously welcomed by their hosts and managed to conclude a truce and exchange prisoners.[113] With peace secured on the eastern border, the Byzantine Empire was now free to concentrate on the Bulgarians. These diplomatic measures of the Byzantine government were, however, successfully stopped by Simeon's countermeasures. The Serbs were defeated by the Bulgarian army, while he apparently succeeded to attract the Magyars, as well as part of the Pechenegs, to his side.[114] After the complete defeat of the Byzantines at Acheloos and Katasyrtai in 917, where most of the imperial troops that were engaged in these battles fell on the battlefield, the Byzantine position in the Balkans deteriorated even further.[115] Deprived of the offensive capabilities of its army

111 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 387.2-4.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 197-198. Nicholas, *Letters*, 9.95-98, indicates that the Byzantine attack in 917 was carried out as a consequence that the Bulgarians "...no longer proposed to adhere to the standing agreement".

112 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 389.22.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 196.; *Leo Grammaticus*, 293.5-9.; *Symeon Magister*, 722.14-18.

113 Skylitzes, Synopsis, 197.; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 388.13-19. See also Treadgold, *History*, 474.

114 About Simeon's diplomatic activity among the Pechenegs see Nicholas, *Letter*s, 9.100-102.

115 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 389.10-19.; *Leo Grammaticus*, 294.10-296.19. T*he History of Leo the Deacon, Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*, tr. Alice-Mary Talbot and Dennis F. Sullivan (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2005), 171-172, which was written half a century after the events, reports that at this place "... one can still see heaps of bones next to Anchialos, where the retreating Roman troops were ingloriously cut

after two consecutive heavy defeats, the Byzantine government used its diplomacy for defensive purposes. In order to prevent further Bulgarian incursions into Byzantine territory, the regency immediately sent a letter to Simeon through the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos, in an attempt to calm the situation between the two warring states.

These victories allowed the Bulgarian ruler to demand not only honouring and fulfilment of the previously agreed conditions, but much more. According to Nikolaos Mystikos, he was dissatisfied with the "honour" or "title" he received and repeatedly tried to become *someone else*.[116] From his later letters we get the impression that the Bulgarian emperor aimed to reach the highest power in the *oecumene*,[117] a political aspiration of Simeon which was a direct blow to the Byzantine imperial ideology and represented not only a clear flagrant rejection, but also a public challenge to the Byzantine idea of hegemony.[118]

Without sufficient military forces to oppose Simeon on the battlefield, the only thing the new Byzantine government led by Romanos I Lekapenos (919-944), who had been crowned in 919 as co-emperor of the young Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, could do was to convince the Bulgarian emperor of a truce using various diplomatic means.[119] Militarily inferior to the Bulgarians at the given moment, the Byzantines intensified their diplomatic contacts. According to the surviving reports from the correspondence between Romanos I Lekapenos and his Bulgarian counterpart, large number of envoys led by Byzantine officials were sent to the Bulgarian court, bringing not only proposals for peace, but also many gifts as a gesture of goodwill from the emperor, or by priests who were supposed to influence Simeon through their holiness and piety.[120] Furthermore, as a diplomatic step indicating the seriousness of the Byzantine intentions for a treaty and peace, Nikolaos Mystikos proposed to the Bulgarian emperor that a meeting be arranged in which he would personally attend.[121] These acts of appeasement and persuasion were mostly used by the Patriarch in moments when there was a clear danger for the Byzantine capital. One such example is the Bulgarian attack of 921, when the Patriarch, due to the possible military threat, emphasized that if Simeon decided on peace, he

down at that time". About the defeat at Katasyrtai see *Theophanes Continuatus*, 390.15-21. *Symeon Magister*, 724.7-725.3.

116 Nicholas, *Letter*s, 8.63-87.

117 Ibid, 10.25-28.

118 Petăr Angelov, *Srednovekovnata bălgarska diplomaciia* (Sofia: Paradigma, 2011), 72-73, 75.

119 Jonathan Shepard, "Byzantium in Equilibrium, 886-944", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. III c.900-c.1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 562.

120 About these letters see Théodore Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, ed. and tr. Jean Darrouzes and Leendert G. Westerink (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1978), 5.64.

121 Nicholas, *Letters*, 14.128-145.

would personally lead the negotiations on the Byzantine side.[122] However, he was not only in contact with the Bulgarian emperor. In parallel to this correspondence with Simeon, the Patriarch also tried to influence his closest associates, demanding cessation of hostilities.[123]

The preserved letters of Nikolaos Mystikos and Roman I Lekapenos report that during this correspondence process, the imperial government started offering specific concessions. In addition to proposals for direct negotiations at the highest level and occasional gifts sent through imperial envoys, in exchange for peace the Byzantines offered the Bulgarian emperor the opportunity to be bloodily related to the emperor through the marriage of their children "...as [he] desired before".[124] Since this offer was not actually aimed at marrying one of Simeon's daughters to Konstantinos VII, but with one of the sons of the co-emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, fully aware of the meaning and consequences of this step, Simeon's revolt increased further. Militarily powerful, with most of the Balkans under his control, he informed the Patriarch that the only way to achieve peace was to dethrone the usurper Romanos I Lekapenos from the Byzantine throne and recognize him as a *basileus*.[125] Nikolaos Mystikos rejected this request of the Bulgarian emperor as absurd and without any ideological basis. In exchange, he offered Simeon gold, rich gifts, part of the Byzantine territory or anything else that he would desire and the emperor could permit, if he was to stop his military activities.[126]

The Byzantine Empire did not limit itself to diplomacy that took place only on a personal level. It also began to operate among Bulgaria's neighbours. The author of *De Administrando Imperio* reports that during the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict over the hegemony in the Balkans, the Byzantine government once again managed to win the Serbs to their side. Although the remaining sources are silent on this event, it was most likely accomplished using the diplomatic means the Byzantines had at their disposal, as he reports that the Serbian leader was lured by "...the benefits of the emperor of the Romans".[127] They immediately succumbed to the onslaught of the Bulgarian army and thus the Serbs played the role for which they were intended. They succeeded to redirect Simeon's military pressure from the Byzantine regions in Thrace towards the western Balkan regions several times.[128]

122 Ibid, 20.2-28.
123 Ibid, 12, 13.
124 Ibid, 16.67-70.
125 Ibid, 17.31-74.
126 Ibid, 18.36-40.
127 *DAI,* 32.104-119. Presumably, these favours which the Serbian *archon* received from the emperor were actually gold, various precious gifts and titles, as stated in *DAI*, 32.108-109.
128 Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 426-427.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 113.; Shepard, "Bulgaria: the other Balkan empire", 578.; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 66.

All these measures of the Byzantine Empire proved futile as they did not stop the Bulgarians from attacking the imperial provinces in the Balkans. The reason why they did not achieve more success is because Simeon was well acquainted with the methods of medieval diplomacy. From a position of strength, the Bulgarian emperor started to dictate the terms for a possible settlement. In order to gain a better negotiating position, parallel to the military activities on the field, he also detained the Byzantine messengers,[129] prolonged the mutual correspondence by writing and discussing about trivial matters and insulting, along the way, the Patriarch of Constantinople and Romanos I Lekapenos in his letters.[130] Convinced of his military supremacy and dissatisfied with the Byzantine proposals, he pointed out that only the conquering of the throne in Constantinople and the ceding of the entire west could bring peace between the two Christian nations.[131] Militarily unchallenged, Simeon penetrated several times in the region of Thrace and in 923 he succeeded to conquer the city of Adrianoupolis. Leaving destruction behind him, during the following year, the Bulgarian emperor managed to arrive unhindered before the walls of Constantinople.[132]

However, instead of starting a siege, the sources report that Simeon asked for negotiations conducted personally by the Byzantine emperor.[133] This sudden change in policy of the Bulgarian emperor was, in fact, a consequence of Byzantine diplomatic activity.[134] The meeting between the two Balkan sovereigns, which took place at the temporary port in the Golden Horn near Kosmidion, is very vividly depicted in the source material. Chronicles testify that Romanos I Lekapenos addressed Simeon with a speech filled with Christian ethics. According to these, it exerted a strong influence on the Bulgarian emperor "...who was put to shame by his humility and promised to make peace".[135] This is evidenced in the letter of Nikolaos Mystikos sent to Simeon immediately after this meeting, in which he indicated that Simeon did not adhere to his word, reprimanding him and asking him where "...are the promises you made? What has become of that blessed peace of which you spoke?"[136]

129 Nicholas, *Letters*, 21.201-203.

130 For the offensive tones see Nicholas, *Letters,* 30.8-14.

131 Nicholas, *Letters*, 27.73-77.

132 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 401.3-402.8, 404.18-405.20.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 207-211.

133 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 405.20-23.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 212.; *Leo Grammaticus*, 310.1-311.10.

134 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 253-254. The diplomatic measures succeeded to neutralize the Bulgarian attempts for alliance with the Fatimids and a joint attack on the Byzantine capital. In the vicinity of Calabria, probably through previously received information, the Byzantine forces managed to capture the Bulgarian-Arab delegation which was returning to Bulgaria. The Byzantines offered to the captured Arab envoys an extension of the previously concluded truce and rich gifts. Satisfied with this offer, they accepted it and were sent back. Simeon again tried to arrange a joint Bulgarian-Arab campaign against the Byzantine Empire, this time with the Arabs of Tarsus. However, this attempt also failed. Romanos I Lekapenos signed a truce and exchanged prisoners with the Baghdad Caliphate.

135 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 409.7.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 213.

136 Nicholas, *Letters*, 31.24-27.

The preserved Byzantine correspondence written after this meeting, as well as the remaining written sources, indicate that after the peace treaty with the Baghdad Caliphate, the Byzantine Empire could strengthen itself militarily in the Balkans through transfer of troops from Asia Minor, and Simeon could no longer comply with his ultimate demands. However, since Bulgarian military capability was still powerful, the Byzantine government could not completely reject Simeon's terms. In exchange for a cessation of hostilities and recognition of Romanos I Lekapenos as emperor, the Bulgarian emperor received some concessions from the Byzantine government that probably did not significantly differ from those given to him in 913.[137] According to the sources, during the negotiations it was agreed to pay a tribute in amount of one hundred *skaramangioi* to the Bulgarian emperor.[138] However, the biggest concession was the recognition of Simeon's title of *basileus* on behalf of Romanos I Lekapenos. His designation as spiritual brother in the diplomatic letters basically meant political equality with the Byzantine emperor, but excluded the highest supremacy within the "hierarchy of states".[139] Additional evidence that the title of *basileus* was recognized to the Bulgarian ruler is the report given in a court panegyric by Symeon Logotethes, later presented by Skylitzes in his *Synopsis Historion*, according to whom, "...a portent occurred that day which is worth reporting. They say that two eagles flew in the sky above where the emperors were conversing; they shrieked, paired up and then separated, one flying towards the city, the other into Thrace".[140] Although this was a major political concession on the Byzantine side, as well as a severe blow to its imperial prestige, nevertheless, it produced the desired result. Probably satisfied by the negotiations conducted with the Byzantine emperor, as well as by the mutual agreement that had been reached, Simeon returned to his own country.[141]

The truce agreed between the two sovereigns in Kosmidion represented a significant diplomatic victory for the Byzantine Empire that managed to halt the Bulgarian military threat. However, it did not lead to any significant changes in the Balkans. In fact, the letter Nikolaos Mystikos sent to Simeon the following year testifies that the agree-

137 This Byzantine-Bulgarian treaty is mentioned by the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos in his letter sent by Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 5.135-141, to Simeon during 925 as a basis for a possible peace between the two states.

138 For this tribute see Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 5.140. According to Stephenson, B*yzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 23, it was agreed to renew the annual tribute established by Leon VI.

139 Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos in his letter sent by Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 6.69-70, to Simeon after 924 indicates that the Byzantines were not against his calling and titling himself as *basileus* in his own state.

140 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 213.

141 According to Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 213, Simeon "...enthusiastically told his officials about the modesty of the emperor, likewise of his generosity and freedom with money". Cf. *Theophanes Continuatus*, 409.17-20. See also Simeonov, "Topografiia i diplomaciia", 356-361.

ment reached between the two sovereigns was not respected.[142] Nevertheless, regardless of the fact that this diplomatic measure did not lead to permanent peace agreement, it represents a harbinger of the change in the Byzantine foreign policy towards Bulgaria. The preserved letters of Nikolaos Mystikos and Romanos I Lekapenos, written after the meeting in Kosmidion, point to a new arrangement of the Byzantine diplomacy in relation to Simeon. The defensive position previously observed in the correspondence of the Byzantine government with the Bulgarian emperor was now replaced by clear signs of superiority and self-confidence achieved by the peace with the Arabs which came into force on the eastern border and in Italy, as well as by the re-acquisition of the Serbs as allies of the emperor.[143]

The letters from this period indicate that one of the reasons for the correspondence of the Byzantine government with the Bulgarian ruler, if not the most important one, was Simeon's use of the title of *basileus of the Romans* immediately after the meeting of the two sovereigns.[144] This act of the Bulgarian emperor represents in fact, a public rejection of the Byzantine "divine" right to supreme power. Although Romanos I Lekapenos opposed Simeon's use of the adjective *of the Romans* in his title during their correspondence, nevertheless his declarations confirm that his use of the general title of *basileus* was recognized by the Byzantine government. His personal statements are evidence that Romanos I Lekapenos did not oppose the use of the title *basileus* by the Bulgarian ruler, but only the use of the adjective *of the Romans*.[145] The constant naming of Simeon as a spiritual brother in the correspondence was also a sign of some sort of political equality between the two sovereigns, which in turn indicates to the fact that the title of *basileus* which was conferred to the Bulgarian ruler was officially recognized.[146]

However, the diplomatic correspondence of the Byzantines from a position of strength did not bring any significant result. It did not exert any influence on Simeon and it did not change his military and political intentions. He carried the title *basileus of the Romans* until his death in 927, defying the Byzantine right to hegemony in the Christian *oecumene* and continuing his military campaigns in the Balkans, but this time aimed at its western regions, towards Serbia and Croatia.[147]

142 Nicholas, *Letters*, 31.

143 Treadgold, *History*, 478.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 112.

144 About Simeon's seals see Jordanov, *Corpus*, 73-85. Also, Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 112-113.; Shepard, "Bulgaria: the other Balkan empire", 578.

145 Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 6.64-70.

146 Ibid, 5.96, 6.2, 6.31.

147 Skylitzes, Synopsis, 214. See Steven Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his Reign. A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 95-96.

Petar, basileus of Bulgaria, and the triumph of the Byzantine Empire

With Simeon's disappearing from the historical scene, the period of constant warfare in the Balkans ended. The new ruler of Bulgaria, Petar, apparently did not share the same ideas and views as his father regarding the foreign policy. According to the *Life of St. Luke the Younger*, he was, in fact, presented as a zealous Christian who greatly disliked bloodshed and hated wars. In this source, as well as on the surviving seals, he is named and titled as "Petar the God-pleasing emperor".[148] The texts of Theophanes Continuatus and John Skylitzes, which document the change of power in Bulgaria, testify that immediately after the death of Simeon, Petar, the new Bulgarian ruler, and his closest associate and uncle Georgi Soursouboul, launched an attack in the regions of the *thema* Makedonia. This rapid mobilization of the army and starting of a military campaign during the first days of his reign indicates that there was some political background behind his move and, presumably, it represented some kind of demonstration of his military power, carried out in an attempt to strengthen his position,[149] as well as to extract certain concessions from the Byzantine government. An additional fact that favours this assumption is the decision of the Bulgarian leadership to send envoys to the Byzantine Empire with a request to start peace negotiations.

In their texts, the later Byzantine chroniclers present an official picture of the reasons that led to these negotiations, all originating from one single source - the *Chronicle* of Theophanes Continuatus. He reports that "...when the neighboring nations, the Turks [Magyars], the Croats, and all the rest, learned of Simeon's death, they decided to attack the Bulgarians. Because a terrible famine and an infestation of locusts tormented the Bulgarian people, the Bulgarians feared an invasion from other nations, but they feared the attack from the Romans most of all. After consulting, they decided to launch a campaign against the Romans and entered [thema] Macedonia to strike fear into the Romans. When they learned that the emperor Romanos had marched against them, Petar and Georgi secretly sent a monk named Kalokyros, an Armenian by birth, with a chrysobull. The content of that chrysobull was that they would accept peace with the Romans, and not only were they ready to conclude such [peace], but if the Romans wanted, to conclude a marriage contract as well".[150]

148 *Vita S. Lucae Junioris*, Patrologia Graeca, Tomus CXI, ed. Jacques P. Migne (Paris, 1856), col. 453.

149 The report in *Theophanes Continuatus*, 412.11-22, and Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 215, 218, regarding the attempts of his brothers John and Michael to remove Petar from the throne with the help of some of the Bulgarian boyars is sufficient evidence.

150 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 412.11-22. Cf. Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 215.; *Leo Grammaticus*, 315.17-316.10.; *Symeon*

Theophanes Continuatus' own explanation of the course of these events and the fear of the Bulgarians is quite contradictory, to say the least. Being in such a difficult situation, both internal and external, it is unlikely that Petar would undertake a military campaign just to intimidate the Byzantines. In fact, it can be concluded that Theophanes was trying to portray the treaty and marriage as an achievement of the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos and the Byzantine diplomacy in a response to the demonstration of the Bulgarian military force,[151] and not as a necessity caused by the difficult situation in which, it seems, the Byzantine Empire found itself at that moment not only due to the sudden Bulgarian attack carried out through the Thracian regions, but also due to the renewed warfare on the eastern frontier.[152] Unable to fight simultaneously on two fronts, the only solution for the Byzantine emperor was the quick acceptance of the treaty proposal noted in the *Chronicles*. However, the way in which this entire event is presented, as well as the style and details concerning the course of the official negotiations and the individuals who took part in them, only add to this fact. All this points to the assumption that the author actually wanted to present the peace signed with the long-time enemies, the Bulgarians, as a triumph of the Byzantine Empire and its sovereign.[153]

According to the source material, immediately after the Bulgarian request, the Byzantines sent a delegation consisting of two priests, the monk Theodosios Aboukes and the palace chaplain Konstantinos of Rhodes, which had the authority to negotiate the future terms of peace. The Byzantine chroniclers reporting on this event are actually quite silent on the clauses that were essentially negotiated. They bear witness only to one of these, the wedding of the Bulgarian ruler Petar and the granddaughter of the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, Maria. The most that can be learned from the Chronicles is the course of the talks themselves, which initially took place in the city of Mesembria, and after some of the terms were agreed upon, they continued in Constantinople, where the peace treaty was finally concluded. Immediately afterwards the two sovereigns met at Blachernae and after a formal conversation they agreed to the previously arranged terms of peace and signed the treaty.[154] With that, the marriage alliance between the Bulgarian ruler Petar and princess Maria Lekapena was prearranged, and the wedding was then held in the church of the Zoodochos Pege in front of the entire senate and other influential persons from the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria.[155]

Magister, 740.14-740.23.; Zonarae, *Epitome Historiarum*, 61.5-18.

151 Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 272-273.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 24-25.

152 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 415.10-417.2.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 216-217.

153 About the homily regarding the Byzantine-Bulgarian peace see *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae* Tomus V, ed. Ivan Dujčev et al., (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1964), 83-101.

154 Alexandrov, "The Bulgarian-Byzantine treaty of 927", 39.

155 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 412.22-415.10.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 216-217. For a general overview of the course

After such a long period of painstaking diplomatic attempts by the Byzantine government to end the hostilities, it finally produced the desired result. By only using diplomatic means (military forces were used only in cases of defence of the capital) the Byzantine Empire managed to stop the Bulgarian attempt for hegemony in the Balkans, as well as in the *oecumene*. Although after the conclusion of the peace the relations between Constantinople and Preslav were officially sincere and cordial, the sources nevertheless indicate that the Byzantine government took various diplomatic activities to secure the peace and the subordinate status of the new Bulgarian emperor.[156] Even the constant visits of Maria Lekapena to her grandfather, the Byzantine emperor,[157] can be observed as a kind of opportunity to learn first-hand about the current situation at the Bulgarian court.

The expectations that the Byzantine government had from the concluded peace agreement were not in vain. In the person of the new Bulgarian emperor the Empire found a man who did not challenge, but accepted the Byzantine ideology and his position in the *oecumen*e and the "hierarchy of states". Decades of war were now replaced by forty years of peaceful coexistence between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria, which was confirmed by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos' son, Romanos II (959–963).[158] This extremely long peace allowed the Byzantines to direct all their military resources from the Balkan *themata* to the eastern frontier, for the offensive needs against the Arabs. The results were immediately visible, as this period can be characterized as one of the most glorious moments of the Byzantine military history. Freed from the Bulgarian military threat in the Balkans, during the next few decades the Byzantine army managed to bring the Arab military power to its knees, moving the frontier far into the East to the Armenian regions and to Syria in the south,[159] thereby significantly increasing the territory of the Byzantine Empire.

The military successes on the eastern border against the age-old enemy, the Arabs, managed to heal the shaken political and military prestige of the Byzantine emperor. This is noted in the peace agreement which, according to John Zonaras, was renewed at the request of the Bulgarian emperor sometime during 963, immediately after the death of Empress Maria Lekapena.[160] The fact that the Byzantine political and diplomatic posi-

of the Byzantine-Bulgarian negotiations see also Simeonov, "Topografiia i diplomaciia", 361-364.

156 This refers to the permission, reported by *Theophanes Continuatus*, 419.10-24, given by the Byzantine government to Jovan, the brother of the Bulgarian emperor Petar who was a pretender to the throne and rebelled against him, to live in Constantinople.

157 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 422.10-15.

158 According to *Theophanes Continuatus*, 470.20-471.2, Romanos II sent to "...every Roman chief and imperial strategos, [as well as to] Bulgaria...friendly letters...confirming friendly treaties".

159 About the military expeditions on the eastern front after the peace of 927 see Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 137-150.; Treadgold, History, 480-485.

160 Zonarae, *Epitome Historiarum*, 75.15-21.

tion in relation to Bulgaria was significantly improved is seen in Petar's agreement to send his two sons, Boris, his heir to the throne, and Roman, as hostages to Constantinople as a condition for the renewal of the treaty.[161] This diplomatic step of sending prominent persons as hostages not only represented a kind of guarantee to maintain the peace, but also indicated the political subordination of one of the parties during the negotiations, in this case Bulgaria, and was obviously a consequence of its current military inferiority.

The Byzantine policy of imposing political hegemony in the Balkans gained additional momentum in the 960s during the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas (963-969), who managed to conquer Crete, Cyprus and Cilicia from the Arabs.[162] This change in the attitude of the Byzantine government is easily seen in the event witnessed in the *Chronicle* of Leo the Deacon. He notes that, when the Bulgarian "... ambassadors came to him to say that their ruler [Petar] demanded the customary tribute..." the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas was overcome with unaccustomed anger. Speaking in a louder voice than usual he replied that "...It would be a dreadful fate now to befall the Romans, who destroy their every foe with armed force, if they would have to pay tribute like captives to the particularly wretched and abominable Scythian people!" Turning to his father Bardas he asked the Bulgarian envoys did they "...unawares beget me as a slave? Shall I, the revered emperor of the Romans, be reduced to paying tribute to a most wretched and abominable people?" After ordering that they be physically abused, he told them to convey to "...your leather-gnawing ruler who is clad in a leather jerkin that the most mighty and great emperor of the Romans is coming immediately to your land, to pay you the tribute in full, so that you may learn, O you who are thrice a slave through your ancestry, to proclaim the rulers of the Romans as your masters, and not to demand tribute of them as if they were slaves".[163]

The next step taken by the Byzantine emperor after the diplomatic incident with the Bulgarian envoys does not explicitly state his true intentions. According to the source material, after visiting the Thracian border cities, Nikephoros II Phokas together with the military forces at his disposal (some of them were on the eastern border fighting against the Arabs) arrived at the "Great Dyke",[164] where they managed to conquer "...all the [Bulgarian] fortresses that bordered on Roman territory".[165] Probably as a result of the hasty preparations, but also due to the difficult terrain full of forests, swamps and narrow mountain passes, as well as the active war in the East, Nikephoros II Phokas was not eager to penetrate deep into the Bul-

161 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 246. According to Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 237.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 48.; Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 294, after the show of the Byzantine military might in Thrace, Petar's sons were sent to Constantinople.

162 Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 128.

163 *Leo the Deacon*, 110.

164 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 265.

165 *Leo the Deacon*, 111.

garian territory and commence an actual military campaign. Instead of continuing with the campaign, he sent a letter to the Bulgarian emperor accusing him that he did not take any measures against the Magyar attacks on Byzantine territory, which was a shrewd diplomatic attempt by the emperor to find a *casus belli* for the hostilities that would follow.[166]

In an effort to avoid direct confrontation with the Bulgarians, but also because of his commitment to the eastern front, the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas tried to put pressure on Petar in a similar way as his predecessor Leon VI had done on Simeon in 893, by calling upon one of the northern peoples to wage war on his behalf. Sources report that he decided to call on the Rus, a people whose influence and military power had been on the rise since the destruction of the Khazar state. Apparently, this was a diplomatic move actually undertaken in an attempt to protect the Byzantine interests on the northern shore of the Black Sea. For this purpose, Kalokyros, son of the *proteuon* of Cherson, previously honoured with the title of *patrikios*, was sent to Svyatoslav, the prince of the Rus, to convince him to attack the Bulgarians from the North. According to Leo the Deacon, with intention of ensuring the positive outcome of the diplomatic mission, the Byzantine government entrusted gold in amount of 15 *kentenaria* to their envoy, which was to be distributed to prince Svyatoslav and his associates.[167] He probably also had permission from the Byzantine emperor to offer rich gifts and aulic titles to the prince of Rus and his retinue during negotiations if they accepted his proposal,[168] for "... all the Scythians are exceptionally greedy and particularly gluttonous...and susceptible to the promising and taking of bribes".[169]

The further course of events is very difficult to determine due to the frequent divergences and disagreements in the sources. What can be concluded is that the Byzantine diplomacy initially managed to realize the planned agenda. Unable to deal with the Rus army, Petar probably asked that the treaty previously rejected, go into effect again. An additional reason that forced him to take this step was the unfavourable situation in the southwestern regions of Bulgaria, which were probably cut off from the capital as a result of the ongoing turmoil there. According to Skylitzes, this was caused by David, Moses, Aaron and Samuil, the sons of the *comes* Nicholas, who "...were unsettling the Bulgar's land".[170] What is interesting is that this uprising appeared almost simultaneously with the Rus military attack on Bulgaria.[171] Appar-

166 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 265.; *Leo the Deacon*, 111.

167 *Leo the Deacon*, 111-112. See also Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 128.; Treadgold, *History*, 502.; Shepard, "Bulgaria: the other Balkan empire", 584.

168 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 265.

169 *Leo the Deacon*, 128.

170 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 246.

171 For the possible connection between these developments in Bulgaria and the arranged marriage between Samuil and Agatha, the daughter of *proteuon* Chryselios of Dyrrachion, see Dragan Gjalevski, "Za brakot na Samuil i Agata", in *Zbornik na trudovi od megjunarodniot simpozium "Denovi na Justinijan I – Samuilovata*

ently the Bulgarian envoys that were in Constantinople at the time when Liudprand was there on a mission, were sent with the purpose to conclude a treaty with the Byzantine Empire.[172]

Nikephoros II Phokas most likely used this Bulgarian request for peace to dictate certain conditions favourable to the Byzantine Empire. Although not attested, it can be assumed that one of the conditions, if not the main, was the abdication of Petar and the enthronement of his son Boris as a new Bulgarian emperor, since the sources report that he was sent by the Byzantines to secure his ancestral throne.[173] This assumption is supported by the information in the *Chronicle* of Leo the Deacon, which indicates that after the Rus had attacked, Petar retreated to a monastery where he later died as a result of his deteriorating health, which again points to his possible abdication from the throne.[174]

The Byzantine emperor immediately saw that his idea had failed. Leo the Deacon points out that the imperial envoy Kalokyros rebelled and allied with Svyatoslav against the Byzantine Empire.[175] However, after the initial successes in Bulgaria, the prince of Rus retreated back to Kiev because of a Pecheneg attack on his capital.[176] It can be assumed that this was probably a military diversion undertaken by the Byzantine government in order to get rid of the prince of Rus and his army, due to the danger he started to pose on the Byzantine policy of hegemony in the Balkan Peninsula.[177] The complete failure of this Byzantine military plan can be seen only a year later, when Svyatoslav along with Kalokyros and his new allies beyond the Danube, the Pechenegs and the Magyars,[178] returned to Bulgaria in order to conquer it.[179] In an attempt to protect the Byzantine interests in the Balkans and repel the new Rus threat, Nikephoros II Phokas decided that a closer relationship should be established with the Bulgarian state. For this purpose, the Byzantine emperor sent a delegation led by the *patrikios* Nikephoros Erotikos and Philotheos, the metropolitan of Euchaita, which was cordially received by the Bulgarian emperor. The extreme seriousness of the political situation at the moment is noted, according to Leo the Deacon, in the concession offered by the Byzantine emperor. The basis for

država i Vizantija: Istorija, legenda, tradicija I nasledstvo", Skopje 17-18 oktomvri, 2014 g., ured. Mitko B. Panov (Skopje: Kontura, 2015), 88-89.

172 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 250.

173 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 246.

174 *Leo the Deacon*, 129.

175 According to *Leo the Deacon*, 128, 130, Kalokyros had a desire to seize the Byzantine throne.

176 *The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian text*, ed. and tr. Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass.: The Medieval Academy of America, 1953), 85.

177 According to Treadgold, History, 503, the Byzantine emperor persuaded the Pechenegs to attack Kiev. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 71, has a different opinion and assumes that the Bulgarians incited the Pechenegs to attack Kiev. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 129, leaves the question open.

178 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 276. For Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 49, Kalokyros himself played a significant role in the conclusion of the military alliance between Svyatoslav and the Pechenegs and Magyars.

179 The *Russian Primary Chronicle*, 86.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 266.

the conclusion of an alliance and friendship between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria, as well as the securing of military assistance against the common enemy, was the marriage offer between the sons of Romanos II, the Byzantine crown princes' Basileios and Konstantinos, and some unnamed Bulgarian noblewomen of royal blood, probably sisters of Boris II. However, this plan of Nikephoros II Phokas failed as a result of his dethronement.[180]

This was the last Byzantine-Bulgarian diplomatic contact. The new Byzantine emperor Ioannes I Tzimiskes (969-976) probably decided that it was futile to continue with this plan after the capture of Boris II by the Rus. Instead, he began negotiations with Svyatoslav. The envoys sent to the prince of Rus carried out their mission in accordance to the already established principles of diplomatic praxis that proved to be successful in the past i.e., by offering a bribe.[181] However, prince Svyatoslav considered diplomacy a sign of weakness and from a position of strength he demanded an unreasonably high tribute in exchange for all the captives and conquered cities and regions, and if his request was not accepted then, he informed the emperor that the Byzantines should immediately withdraw from Europe, which does not belong to them, and leave for Asia Minor.[182] However, despite these threatening words, the diplomatic correspondence continued.

Realizing that the future negotiations with Svyatoslav will be unsuccessful, in 971 the Byzantine emperor started thorough preparations for a military campaign against the Rus. In the war that soon followed, the Byzantine Empire managed to crush the resistance of prince Svyatoslav, who at the end was besieged for three months in the city of Dorostolon.[183] Conquered first by the prince of Rus, and now occupied by the Byzantine army, the fate of the Bulgarian state was sealed. After the victory over the Rus in the same year, Ioannes I Tzimiskes decided to annex and incorporate Bulgaria as a province of the Byzantine Empire. This act was symbolically carried out through the removal of the imperial insignia from the Bulgarian emperor Boris II and their placement in the cathedral church of Saint Sophia, as part of the triumphal ceremony organized in honour of the victory over Svyatoslav and the conquest of Bulgaria.[184] After centuries-long and arduous struggles with the Bulgarian state, the Byzantine Empire finally came out victorious.

---

180 *Leo the Deacon*, 130-132.

181 *Leo the Deacon*, 153, reports that the envoys were supposed to persuade Svyatoslav to accept the previous sum bestowed by Nikephoros II Phokas, which was 15 *kentenaria*, with rich gifts and to "...return to his own territory and the Cimmerian Bosporos, abandoning Mysia, since it belonged to the Romans...from of old". This is also witnessed in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 87.

182 *Leo the Deacon*, 155-156.

183 *Leo the Deacon*, 157-160, 177-199.; Cf. Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 275, 281-293.

184 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 294. About the symbolism of this ritual, see Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory, Triumphal rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the early Medieval West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 173-174.

In search of allies: Croatia and the Serbian principalities

"The inhabitants of the cities of Dalmatia became independent, subject neither to the emperor of the Romans nor to anybody else, and what is more, the nations of those parts, the Croats and Serbs and Zachlumites, Terbuniotes and Kanalites and Diocletians and the Pagani, shook of the reigns of the empire of the Romans and became self-governing and independent, subject to none"

Porphyrogennetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, 29.61-66

By the middle of the 9th century, the Byzantine presence in the Adriatic region was almost symbolic. What remained of the imperial possessions in this part of the Balkan Peninsula after the catastrophic events in the beginning of the 7th century were the islands and certain number of city enclaves scattered along the coast of the Adriatic Sea, which became part of the newly formed thema Dalmatia during the first half of the 9th century.[185] Unlike the coastal regions which maintained its contacts with the Byzantine Empire, the interior of the Balkans was beyond the reach of imperial authority. The author of *De Administrando Imperio* reports that since the time of Herakleios, this territory was inhabited by Slavic tribes which, due to the Byzantine inability for military intervention, managed to form their own principalities later known under the names of Croatia, Serbia, Diocleia, Zachlumia, Terbounia, Kanali and Pagania, i.e., the land of the Arentani. Their rulers, named *župans*, did not recognize the authority of the Byzantine emperor and were independent from him.[186]

---

[185] *DAI*, 29.49-63. For more details about the formation of the *thema* Dalmatia see Jadran Ferluga, *Vizantiska up*rava u *Dalmaciji* (Beograd: SAN, 1957), 1-93. See also Živković, "Uspenskij's Taktikon and the Theme of Dalmatia", 73-85.; Božidar Ferjančić, "Vasilije I i obnova vizantijske vlasti u IX veku", *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 36 (1997): 17-18.

[186] *DAI*, 29.56-58, 63-68. About the location of these principalities in *DAI*, 30.87-119. About the situation in Dalmatia and in the interior of the Balkans see Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 26-29.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 134-139.; Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 231-243.

However, by the middle of 9th century, the Byzantine presence in these Balkan regions started to increase. This change in the interests of the Byzantine government was, in fact, a consequence of the wider military and political situation that had formed in the region. The increasing Frankish influence in Southern Italy and Croatia, the Arab naval activities in the central Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea, as well as the renewed Bulgarian military threat in the eastern parts of the Balkans were all factors that threatened the already weak Byzantine presence in this region, which together with the internal problems led to a temporary breakdown of Byzantine authority in Dalmatia during the reign of Michael II Amorian.[187] Although the source material states that this period of independence of the Dalmatian cities lasted until the accession of Basileios I to the throne,[188] this unfavourable situation probably did not last that long and the Byzantine administration was re-established immediately. Porphyrogennetos reports that in an attempt to ensure the security of the Byzantine dominions on the Adriatic coast, Basileios I ordered that the tribute paid to the *strategos* by the local population, be paid to the Slavs in the interior. This indicates that the military commander was appointed by the previous administration and performed his function even before this emperor came to power i.e., that the Byzantine Empire had already re-established the *thema* Dalmatia in this part of the Balkans.[189]

The Byzantine political interests in this region did not finish with the re-establishment of the administrative control over the Dalmatian cities. The middle of the 9th century, essentially, is a period of intensified Byzantine activity followed by an expansion of the imperial influence throughout the Slavic principalities located not only in the coastal areas, but also in the interior of the Balkan Peninsula. Basically, the political relations established between the Byzantine Empire and other states depended on several conditions, and in relation to the Slavic principalities in the Balkans it also depended on the historical tradition i.e., on the history of the territory where the particular state was located. This is clearly stated in *De Administrando Imperio*, where in his account about the situation in these parts of the Balkans, Porphyrogennetos points out that the entire ter-

187 *DAI*, 29.60-61.; *Theophanes Continuatus,* 84.2-5.

188 After the reign of Michael II Amorian, according to Mladen Ančić, "The Waning of the Empire: The Disintegration of Byzantine rule on the Eastern Adriatic in the 9th century", *Hortus artium medievalium* Vol.4 (1998): 15-19, and Neven Budak, "Croatia and Byzantium in the Tenth century. A Latin Member of the Byzantine Commonwealth", in Center, *Province and Periphery in the Age of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos: From De Ceremoniis to De Administrando Imperio,* ed. Niels Gaul, Volker Menze and Csanád Bálint (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz GMBH & Co.KG, 2018), 221, the *thema* Dalmatia was cut off from Constantinople until the reign of Basileios I, but this direct Byzantine presence did not last long and from the beginning of the 10th century the connection with the Byzantine capital was symbolically preserved through the local elite.

189 *DAI*, 30.127-132. On the restoration of Byzantine power in Dalmatia see Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 234-235, 246. For a different opinion see Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava u Dalmaciji*, 49-67.

ritory from the Adriatic Sea to the Danube was formerly under Roman administration.[190] The same is emphasized when he explains the formation of Croatia, Serbia, Diocleia, Zachlumia, Terbounia, Kanali and Pagania.[191] Although this manuscript originates from the middle of the 10th century, nevertheless, these statements are indisputable evidence of the way in which the Byzantine Empire, despite its pragmatic policy, actually perceived the Slavic principalities from the Adriatic region in the Balkans - as polities formed on a former imperial territory which, due to God's will, was only temporarily outside the borders of the Byzantine hegemony,[192] and will one day return under the rule of its legitimate master, the emperor in Constantinople.

Sources report that restoration of the Byzantine authority in this part of the Balkans was, in fact, carried out as a result of Slavs' request to accept the Christian religion. According to the account of Porphyrogennetos, during the reign of the emperor Basileios I they "...send [to him] diplomatic agents, begging and praying him that those of them who were unbaptized might receive baptism and that they might be, as they had originally been, subject to the empire of the Romans; and that glorious emperor...gave ear to them and send out imperial agents and priests with him and baptized all of them who were unbaptized".[193] The same process is noted by Theophanes Continuatus who indicates that after "...the aforementioned Slavic tribes – Croats, Serbs and others – saw what Roman reinforcements had done for the inhabitants of Dalmatia, and when they learned of the gentleness and all-embracing justice and virtue of the new Roman emperor, they preferred <the lot of> well-ruled subjects to the instability of arrogant <self> rule, and were eager to return to the dominion of their previous masters, and be brought back into Roman servitude. Indeed, they, too, sent envoys to the emperor towards this end...and requested that they, too, might submit to the gentle yoke of the power of Rome and be counted among the subjects of its shepherd. The emperor found their request reasonable and granted it...and forthwith dispatched priests as well as the imperial envoy...in order to rescue these <tribes> from spiritual danger, restore them safely to their former faith, and deliver them from the sins of ignorance or <rather> folly... When this God-pleasing deed was done...and reverted to the submission to the Romans, the emperor's domain became whole again in this parts".[194] However, what is indicated by the scholars is that the Christian religion was already firmly rooted among the population of Croatia in 795, if not earlier.[195] In relation to the Serbs, the process of their Christianization

190 *DAI*, 29.14-16, 30.6-12.

191 Ibid, 31.26-27, 32. 21-23, 35.3-4.

192 The historical continuity of this Byzantine foreign policy is best observed in the letter of Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 5.122-124, sent to Simeon in the name of the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos.

193 *DAI*, 29.70-75.

194 *Vita Basilii Imperatoris*, 54.1-27.

195 For more details on the Croatian baptism with accompanying bibliography see Daniel Dzino, *Becoming*

probably started much earlier, before the reign of Michael II the Amorian, but nonetheless, it was completed when this emperor, Basileios I, the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, was on the Byzantine throne.[196]

Although it is indicated that the reason behind the Byzantine involvement in this part of the Balkans was about ecclesiastical matters, the propagation of Christianity and the baptism of the nonbelievers on their own request is actually only one of the many missions that the imperial government conducted on order of the emperor, and their agenda was purely political. The sources' emphasizing that the mission among the Slavic principalities was led by imperial officials, while the priests were perceived only as part of their escort, leads to the conclusion that the secular politics was a priority over the religious questions which were secondary. If the purpose of the mission during the reign of Basileios I was just baptism and acceptance of Christianity then, like in other similar cases, the missionaries would have been sent under the instruction of some church authority, not the emperor.[197] Even if we accept that part of the baptism of the population in the Serbian principalities was performed on the initiative of the Byzantine emperor, nevertheless, the main religious issue for the Byzantine Empire was the attempt of the pope of Rome, during the middle of the 9th century, to fully restore the Papacy's spiritual hegemony in the Balkan Peninsula, known in the past under the name Illyricum, which was abruptly interrupted after the settlement of the Slavic tribes.[198] The events that followed only confirm this assumption. In fact, the Byzantine government's conferral, as well as the use of the title *archon* for the Slavic rulers, rather than the indigenous title *župan* or *ban*, suggests that a kind of closer political relationship was established between the two parties.[199]

Slav, becoming Croat. Identity Transformations in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia (Leiden: Brill NV, 2010), 201-208.; Tibor Živković, *De Conversione Croatorum et Serborum. A lost Source* (Belgrade: Institute of History, 2012), 56-66, 201.; Vlasto, *The Entry of Slavs*, 189.; *Curta, Southeastern Europe*, 139.

196 For more details about the Christianization in Serbia see Predrag Komatina, *Crkvena politika Vizantije od kraja ikonoborstva do smrtti cara Vasilija I* (Beograd: SANU, 2014), 264-266, 277-285.; Živković, *De Conversione*, 163-166, 179-180, 201. Apparently, during the time of Vlastimir, Christianity was already established in Serbia.

197 About the centralized missionary activity at the initiative of the Byzantine emperor see Dragan Gjalevski, "Diplomatskite aspekti na vizantiskoto misionerstvo", in *Četvrt megjunaroden naučen simpozium "Denovi na Justinijan I – Vizantiskoto misionerstvo i pridobivkite za Evropa", 11-12 noemvri, Skopje 2016*, red. Mitko B. Panov (Skopje: Evro-Balkan, 2017), 72-74, 79-80.

198 Predrag Komatina, "The Church of Serbia at the Time of Cyrilo-Methodian Mission in Moravia", in *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of Slavs* (Thessaloniki, 2015), 711-718. See also Srđan Pirivatrić, "The Serbs and the Overlapping Circles of Rome and Constantinople (7th to 16th Century): An Overview of the Political and Ideological Relationships", in *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Belgrade, 22-27 August, 2016* (Belgrade: The Serbian National Committee of AIEB, 2017), 225-226.

199 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 679, gives a long list of titles intended exclusively for foreign rulers. One of these is the title of archon (ἄρχων).

The reason for the Byzantine-Serbian rapprochement during the second half of the 9th century should be sought in the fact that the renewed Bulgarian military threat did not pose a great danger only for the emperor, but also for the Serbian rulers. Unlike the other principalities on the Adriatic coast and the more distant Croatia, which were more frightened by the Arab maritime threat or the hegemony of the Franks, Serbia, as Bulgaria's immediate neighbour,[200] was apparently affected the most by its expansionist policy. Therefore, the Byzantines saw this polity as a natural ally who would help them militarily in the fight against the Bulgarian menace. It seems that the Byzantine Empire was perceived in the same way by Serbia. The reason for this relationship was primarily of geographical nature. Located in the interior of the Balkan Peninsula, far from Constantinople or any other major city centre, the influence of the Byzantine Empire in Serbia seems to have been limited and without any immediate danger to its ruler. Although, through the act of baptism, the Byzantines probably tried to impose the ideology of subordination to the emperor on the ruler of Serbia, it should be emphasized that with this step, similarly like in the case of Boris of Bulgaria, he gained international recognition[201] and, apparently, political superiority over other Serbian principalities. Therefore, the ruler of Serbia was probably more afraid of the immediate Bulgarian military aggression on his eastern border, than of the Byzantine ideology and the formal political dependence that resulted from it. And this common fear that was shared by both states made their political rapprochement inevitable.

Despite the fact that the Byzantine Empire was politically active among some Slavic tribes in the Adriatic region of the Balkans even before emperor Basileios I, the sources unequivocally indicate that the influence in this region became much more pronounced during the reign of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty. In fact, the Byzantine presence in these regions was a direct consequence of the Arab military threat on the Adriatic, where the Arab fleet managed first to plunder the coastal cities of Butova (Budva), Rossa and Decatera (Kotor), and then to besiege Ragusa (Dubrovnik). After receiving a request for military assistance from the elite of this city, the Byzantine emperor immediately sent a large fleet commanded by *patrikios* and *droungarios* Niketas Ooryphas, which forced the Arabs to lift their siege and sail to Bari.[202] After this Byzantine success, the neighbouring Slavs voluntarily requested to "...be, as they had originally been, subject to the empire of the Romans".[203] What can be concluded from the sources is that after the lifting of the Arab siege from beneath the walls of Ragusa there was a change in the rela-

200 About the geographical position of Serbia see *DAI*, 30.118-119.
201 The list of the Byzantine diplomatic correspondence found in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 691, confirms this.
202 *DAI*, 29.88-100. Cf. *Vita Basilii Imperatoris*, 53.27-41.
203 *DAI*, 29.72-73. Cf. *Vita Basilii Imperatoris*, 54.1-8.

tions between the Byzantine Empire and the Slavic principalities from the interior of the Balkans. This can be especially observed in the Byzantine military campaign against the Arabs of Bari, undertaken in alliance with the pope of Rome and the Frankish emperor Louis the Younger (844-875), in which, according to the Byzantine sources, the military units of the Slavs from the Balkans also participated by imperial order.[204]

Although the sources report that the Slavic principalities arbitrarily recognized the authority of the Byzantine emperor and became his subjects, at the same time, they also present another picture which somewhat refutes these claims. Porphyrogennetos notes that immediately after Basileios I baptized the Slavs "...he then appointed for them princes whom they themselves approved and chose, from the family which they themselves loved and favoured".[205] The same is also observed by Theophanes Continuatus, according to whom after the baptism of the Slavs, the Byzantine emperor ordered that those whom they themselves elect and ordain, become their rulers,[206] which is an unusual measure of the Byzantine government if they really became Byzantine subjects. It is worth noting that according to the sources the Arentani, also known as Pagani, were not baptized at the same time as the other Slavic tribes and did not participate in the siege of the city of Bari, which indicates the fact that they were independent and not included in this Byzantine policy.[207] Furthermore, although the Croats participated in the campaign in Southern Italy, the source material confirms that they were not Byzantine subjects, but at that time recognized the supreme authority of the Frankish emperor Louis II.[208] All these examples indicate that the relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Slavic principalities, as well as the political situation in this region of the Balkans, was not as Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos wanted to portray it in his text.

The discrepancy of facts in the source material is clearly visible. Therefore, it can be assumed that the reports in the sources of how all Slavs were baptized and submitted to the will of the Byzantine emperor are incorrect and, apparently, represent an attempt to ideologize the reign of Basileios I. The possibility that the decision of the Slavic rulers to send representatives and request baptism and submission was forced upon them

204 *DAI*, 29.88-100. Cf. *Vita Basilii Imperatoris*, 55.23-26.
205 *DAI*, 29.75-78.
206 *Vita Basilii Imperatoris*, 54.27-29.
207 *DAI*, 29.79-81.
208 *Fontes Byzantini Historiam Populorum Jugoslaviae Spectantes* Tomus II, rec. Georgio Ostrogorsky (Beograd: Academia Scientarum Serbica, 1958), 16, n.26. More about Croatia in the 9th century in Ivan Mužić, *Hrvatska povijest devetoga Stoljeća* (Split: Matica Hrvatska, 2007), 121-188.; Dzino, *Becoming Slav, becoming Croat*, 175-210.; Neven Budak, "Croats between Franks and Byzantium", *Hortus Artium Medievalium* Vol.3 (1997): 15-18.

is unlikely, mainly because of the inadequate military forces that the Byzantine Empire allocated in this part of the Balkans, although the show of military power under the walls of Ragusa undoubtedly had some influence in that direction. If this were the case, then the Arentani, who remained independent for a few years after the arrival of the Byzantine fleet in the Adriatic Sea, would have accepted Byzantine hegemony at the same time as the other Serbian principalities. However, if one looks at the political environment in the wider region of Southern Italy and the Adriatic Sea during the middle of the 9th century, it can be noted that there were several arguments due to which not only the Byzantines, but also the Slavic principalities, would have an equally strong reason to initiate this step. The Arab naval threat in the central Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea, the growing influence of the Pope and the Frankish king in the Adriatic region, the political approach of the Bulgarian *knyaz* Boris toward Rome, as well as the knowledge of these Slavic rulers that as pagans they could not be accepted and recognized as political entities in international relations, were all factors that, it seems, forced both parties, the Byzantine Empire and the Serbian principalities, to take further steps that would lead to their mutual political rapprochement.

However, despite the agreement to accept the Byzantine hegemony, they did not represent part of the imperial provincial dominions. The fact that the Slavic principalities retained their internal independence is reported not only by Theophanes Continuatus, but also by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos. According to them, the emperor Basileios I allowed them to be ruled by those who they themselves choose and ordain, and who were afterwards politically approved by the Byzantine emperor. This indicates that the subjugation of the Slavic principalities was, in fact, based on certain clientelist relationships that allowed their real power for independent political decision-making to remain intact. Their rulers' frequent defiance and opposition to the Byzantine imperial interests during the late 9th and early 10th centuries is sufficient evidence of this tendency. That the authority of the Byzantine Empire over the Slavic states from the interior of the Balkan Peninsula was not in the rank of vassalage,[209] but of a *limitrophe* client state, is also evidenced by Porphyrogennetos' report about the gold that was paid to their rulers from the Dalmatian cities after the agreement was concluded.[210]

This foreign policy of Emperor Basileios I greatly increased the security of the existing Byzantine possessions in Dalmatia and made the Slavic marauding a thing of the past. Furthermore, the political and diplomatic measures he took led to an increase of

[209] For the political relations between the Byzantine Empire and the states which had concluded an alliance with it and their status, see Dean A. Miller, *Studies in Byzantine diplomacy: sixth to tenth centuries* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International), 1963, 157-170.

[210] *DAI*, 30.123-142.

the Byzantine military potential in this region, as well as to intensified military activity. With the conclusion of the treaty, these Slavic principalities were probably obliged to provide military aid in the form of auxiliary troops. This is explicitly noted by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos. According to him, in the fight against the Arabs from Southern Italy the "...Croat and Serb and Zachlumian chiefs and the Terbounites and Kanalites and the men from Ragusa and all the cities from Dalmatia (for all these were present by imperial mandate); and they crossed over into Lombardy, and [together with the imperial army] laid siege to city of Bari and took it".[211] It seems that the mission for which Neophytos and Nikolaos were sent to Serbia, noted in the life of St. Germanos, was to conclude an agreement and determine the aid that was to be sent to the Byzantine emperor for this military campaign.[212] It should be noted that during this decade of the 9th century, the Slavs from the western part of the Balkan Peninsula were important to the Byzantine government for another reason. Strategically, their proximity to the Bulgarian state made these principalities a significant military and political means of coercion in the eyes of the Byzantines. If necessary, they could exert additional pressure (both military and political) on the Bulgarian ruler, thereby allowing the Byzantine government to force certain concessions upon him during negotiations.

The Byzantine policy of reintegration of the former imperial territories in this part of the Balkans was fully accomplished after the conversion and subjugation of the Arentani, which was probably carried out in 870-871, after the military intervention of the imperial fleet commanded by Niketas Ooryphas[213] and the Croatian recognition of the Byzantine supremacy in 878.[214] This acknowledgement of the Byzantine hegemony was, in fact, a result of the diplomatic activities of the emperor, i.e., the political, financial and military support that he offered to Zdeslav, Trpimir's son and pretender to the Croatian throne, in his fight against Domagoj.[215] However, the complete incorporation of this part of the Balkans within the Byzantine political sphere lasted only for a short period. Soon afterwards, in 879, Croatia rejected the

[211] Ibid, 29.109-112.

[212] Ivan Dujčev, "Une ambassade byzantine auprès des Serbes au IXe siècle", *Recueil de Travaux de l'Institut d'Etudes Byzantines* 7 (1961): 56-57.

[213] *DAI*, 29.79-84. See also Jadran Ferluga, "Vizantisko carstvo i južnoslovenske države IX-X veka", *Zbornik radova vizantološkog instituta* 13 (1971): 77.; Neven Budak, *Prva Stoljeća Hrvatske* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1994), 23.

[214] Budak, *Prva Stoljeća Hrvatske*, 25-26.; Tibor Živković, "On the Baptism of the Serbs and Croats in the time of Basil I (867-886)", *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 2013, no.1 (2013): 42.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 139-140.

[215] After the unsuccessful struggle for the throne, Zdeslav probably fled to Constantinople, where he remained until the death of the Croatian ruler Domagoj. Then, with the military help of the Byzantine Empire, he conquered the Croatian throne. See Budak, *Prva Stoljeća Hrvatske*, 25.; Vlasto, *The Entry of Slavs*, 193.

Byzantine hegemony,[216] and a few years later, the Arentani probably did as well.[217] The Byzantines would once again expand their hegemony over the entire territory of the Balkans, albeit somewhat only nominally, towards the end of the second decade of the 11th century, during the reign of Basileios II.

The Byzantine interest in this part of the Balkans increased during the last decade of the 9th century when a Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict re-emerged. The 894 defeat by the Bulgarian *knyaz* Simeon in the *thema* Makedonia brought to the forefront the importance that the Serbian principalities, and especially Serbia, had for the Byzantine interests in the Balkans. In an attempt to gain as much military and strategic advantage as possible in the renewed conflict, the Byzantine Empire began a wider diplomatic activity among Bulgaria's Balkan neighbours. For the accomplishment of this goal, the Byzantine government used all the available means at its disposal, from recognizing the legitimacy of the Serbian rulers, through gifting of precious gifts, sending significant financial aid, conferring various imperial titles, all the way to giving support to the contenders for the throne of Serbia by allowing them to reside in the city of Constantinople.[218] According to Porphyrogennetos, the contact with the Slavs from this part of the Balkans was made through the *strategos* of the *thema* Dyrrachion. He was probably assigned with a similar duty as the ruling elite of Cherson i.e., to carry out certain diplomatic tasks among the neighbouring polities, in this case Serbia, in the name of the Byzantine emperor. The sources report that the Byzantines achieved some success. Recognizing the authority of Petar, son of Gojnik, they managed to obtain consent for political allegiance with the emperor from the Serbian ruler, and thus, apparently, an agreement for military alliance, which was probably planned for the battle of Boulgarophygon.[219] Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos indicates that these Byzantine-Serbian relations remained unchanged until 913, when a new war with Bulgaria began. According to him, few years after the reign of Emperor Leon VI the Byzantine envoy, *strategos* of Dyrrachion, "...arrived in Pagania, which at that time was under the control of the archon of Serbia, to meet with this same archon Petar in order to advise him about some official matter".[220] Although in this case Porphyrogennetos probably conflated two different Byzantine missions that

[216] Budak, "Croats between Franks and Byzantium", 17.; Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 249-250.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 100-101.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 140.

[217] Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 251.; Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 212.

[218] About the Byzantine-Bulgarian battles around Serbia in *DAI*, 32.91-126. Zacharias, *DAI*, 32.111-114, sent to Constantinople the heads of the generals of the defeated Bulgarian army. This suggests that in his time Serbia was a Byzantine ally, a client-state. For the dating of these events see Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 275-278.; Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 205-206.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 211-213.

[219] *DAI*, 32.77-79.

[220] Ibid, 32.82-86.

were sent to the Serbs,[221] nevertheless, he bears witness to the diplomatic activities of the Byzantine envoys. This is also confirmed by Porphyrogennetos in the 32nd chapter of *De Administrando Imperio* where he tells how, out of envy, Michael, *archon* of Zachlumia, informed Simeon that "...the emperor of the Romans bribed *archon* Petar to take the Turks [Magyars] with him and to go to Bulgaria".[222] He further notes that it "...was at the time when the battle of Acheloos took place between the Romans and the Bulgarians".[223] In fact, in a way this represents a simplified explanation of the conclusions that emerged from the meeting of the imperial envoy with the Serbian *knyaz*, and also of the obligations that, according to the terms of the agreement concluded with the Byzantine emperor, he was obliged to provide as an ally. The gold mentioned by Michael of Zachlumia which was handed over to Petar, probably represented funds that were supposed to cover his military expenses.

However, after the defeat at Boulgarophygon, and especially after the battles at Acheloos and Katasyrtai, in 917, the Byzantine position in the Balkans was completely shaken. In contrast to Serbia, which remained a Byzantine ally, the move taken by the *archon* of Zachlumia, Michael, indicates that he, apparently, was not in a good political relation with the Byzantine government.[224] The following years represent a period of strong diplomatic and military activity, not only by the Byzantine Empire, but also by Bulgaria, which tried to impose its own political influence over the Slavic principalities in this part of the Balkans. Their political contest was mostly directed towards Serbia. Although Simeon had a greater advantage since his country shared a common frontier and if needed, he could intervene militarily, nevertheless, using various diplomatic measures, the Byzantines managed to occasionally pull Serbia away from the Bulgarian influence before it again fell under the control of the Bulgarian emperor.[225] The statement that Zacharias frequently sent envoys to Constantinople, just like the *archons* who ruled before him, is a sufficient confirmation.[226] In the same way, the Byzantine Empire man-

[221] As Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 271-273, n.1397 surmises, it is unlikely that Leon Rhabduchus persisted as a *strategos* of the *thema* Dyrrhachion for 37 years. His mentioning in the letters of Leon Choerosphactès from 910 as *magistros and logothetes tou dromou* indicates that his mission to Serbia was probably carried out between 894 and 896.

[222] *DAI*, 32.86-90.

[223] Ibid, 32.90-91.

[224] Aleksandar Uzelac, "Prince Michael of Zahumlje – a Serbian ally of Tsar Simeon", in *Emperor Symeon's Bulgaria. In the History of Europe's Southeast: 1100 years from the battle at Achelous*, ed. Angel Nikolov and Nikolay Kanev (Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2018), 236-245. Petar's position as a Byzantine protégé probably created resistance among the *archons* of the other Serbian principalities. See Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 273-274.

[225] *DAI*, 32, 100-111.

[226] Ibid, 32.115-116.

aged to win over other Serbian principalities, as in the case of Michael, ruler of Zachlumia, who received a title of *patrikios* and *anthypatos* after Simeon's death, or Petar, the *archon* of Diocleia.[227] The continuous diplomatic activity of the Byzantine government among the Serbian principalities was of great benefit in the fight against the Bulgarian aspirations for hegemony in the Balkans. They forced Bulgaria to focus its political and military resources on its western border, while reducing the military pressure in Thrace.

The frequent military interventions in the western parts of the Balkans brought Bulgaria into direct contact with Croatia, where the defecting Serbian rulers often found refuge. The position of the Croatian state during the second decade of the 10th century is not evident. The sources do not inform whether Croatia acted in agreement with the Byzantines or whether the Croatian conflict with Bulgaria was the result of its own political steps and interests. Be that as it may, the events in the sources hint that some kind of cooperation apparently existed between them.[228] The letter of John X, the pope of Rome, in which Tomislav is named king of Croatia and Dalmatia somewhat complicates the whole situation rather than providing any solution, although the Byzantine *taktikons* unequivocally indicate that during this period the Dalmatian cities were constantly under Byzantine authority.[229] However, the naming of Tomislav as ruler of Dalmatia indicates that there was some contact between the Byzantine Empire and Croatia during this period, whether political or military. Since both states were basically threatened by the Bulgarian foreign policy, it seems that the text in the letter referring to the Croatian ruler was in some way a consequence of the Byzantine-Croatian negotiations and the agreement that was concluded, but interpreted in a way it was seen and understood by papal officials. The reason was probably the financial compensation that the new ally received as a reward for his participation in the fight against Bulgaria i.e., funds that were paid to him in the way that emperor Basileios I had previously done, through the Dalmatian cities.[230] In the end, the Byzantine diplomatic activity proved successful. In 927 the Croatian ruler Tomislav succeeded to defeat Simeon.[231]

[227] The notice of Michael's imperial title in *DAI*, 33.16, is sufficient evidence for the success of the Byzantine diplomacy in Zachlumia. For Petar see Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 255.

[228] Budak, "Croatia and Byzantium in the Tenth Century", 217, 221. The harbouring of Serbian refugees who were Byzantine allies at the time, waging war against Simeon of Bulgaria, events witnessed in *DAI*, 32.119-120, 125, and the peaceful cohabitation with the Byzantines in Dalmatia during this period points to one such possibility.

[229] For the existence of the *thema* Dalmatia throughout the 10th century see Oikonomides, *Les Listes*. About the letter of Pope John X in D*ocumenta historiae Choaticae periodum antiquam illustrantia*, ed. Franjo Rački (Zagreb, 1877), 187. See also Budak, *Prva Stoljeća Hrvatske*, 31-32.

[230] Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 196.

[231] Budak, *Prva Stoljeća Hrvatske*, 31.

After signing the peace treaty with Petar, the son of Simeon and heir to the throne, the Slavic principalities in the Adriatic region of the Balkans no longer had the same political importance for the Byzantine Empire as before. But despite that, some of these still held a significant place in the Byzantine foreign policy. The first was Michael, ruler of Zachlumia, who was conferred with the title of *patrikios* and *anthypatos*.[232] The second was Časlav, archon of Serbia, of whom Porphyrogennetos reports that seven years after Simeon's death, he escaped from Bulgarian captivity and returned to his country where, with the help of Romanos I Lekapenos, he consolidated his power and accepted Byzantine overlordship.[233] Regarding Croatia, the sources report that the rulers from the time of Držislav (mid-10th century) "...were called kings of Croatia and Dalmatia..." and received their royal insignia "... from Constantinople and were named eparchs and patricians",[234] which is clear evidence that there was some diplomatic contact between the two states.[235] The conferment of these rulers with the influential aulic title of *patrikios* instead of *archon* indicates a rise in their importance,[236] as well as a change not only in Byzantine policy, but also in the already existing political relations that these states had with the Byzantine Empire.

The Serbian principalities again came in the focus of the Byzantine interests during the reign of Ioannes I Tzimiskes and his conquest of Bulgaria. However, this time they did not play the role of Byzantine allies, but of countries which were to be militarily subjugated. The source materials report that sometime between 971 and 976, Rascia was conquered by the Byzantines. The discovered seals of the *protospatharios* Ioannes, *katepano* of Ras and Ardalestos Diogenes *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Morava are evidence of this event.[237] The defection of the prince of Ras to Diocleia[238] on the other hand, indicates that the rest of the Serbian principalities had probably already rejected Byzantine hegemony and started

[232] Uzelac, "Prince Michael of Zahumlje", 244. According to Tibor Živković, *Portreti vladara ranog srednjeg veka, Od Vlastimira do Borića* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2006), 80-81, in 927 Michael, as a Byzantine ally, managed to take the city of Sipont in Southern Italy from the Arabs.

[233] *DAI*, 32.128-145.

[234] Archdeacon Thomas of Split, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*, ed. Damir Karbić et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 61. According to the opinion of Budak, "Croatia and Byzantium in the Tenth Century", 218, this probably happened before 976. See also Ančić, "The Waning of the Empire", 20.

[235] For the Byzantine ends see Budak, "Croatia and Byzantium in the Tenth Century", 218-219.

[236] Telemachos Lounghis, "Byzantine Diplomacy", in *Byzantine diplomacy: A seminar*, Stelios Lampakis et al., tr. Norman Russell (Athens: National Printing House, 2007), 40-41, 45. For the position of the *patrikios* in the Byzantine aulic hierarchy, see John B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century: With a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), 27-28.

[237] *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, predgovor, propratne tekstove i prevod Slavko Mijušković (Beograd: Prosveta, 1988), 122. About the Byzantine administrative regions see Bojana Krsmanović, *The Byzantine Province in Change (On the Threshold Between the 10th and the 11th Century)* (Belgrade/Athens: Institute for Byzantine Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2008), 135.

[238] *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 122.

to act independently. Their independence, obviously, continued in the following years. However, the rise of Samuil during the last decades of the 10th century forced Jovan Vladimir, the ruler of Diocleia, to send an embassy to Constantinople with the purpose of concluding an agreement for joint military action against their common enemy.[239] The campaign which Samuil undertook towards the Adriatic regions of the Balkans prevented this military and political rapprochement, and through the dynastic marriage of Jovan Vladimir with his daughter Kosara, he managed to bring Diocleia into his sphere of influence.[240]

The death of Jovan Vladislav in 1018, under the walls of the city of Dyrrachion, allowed the Byzantine Empire to subjugate Samuil's State and finally realize its policy of full reintegration of the Balkan regions under the sceptre of its sovereign. According to the narrations of Skylitzes and the Priest of Diocleia, immediately after this success, Basileios II conquered all of Rascia, Bosnia and Dalmatia, while the Croatian *archon* submitted to his authority.[241] The archaeological finds, the seals of Leon *spatharokandidatos* and (archon) of Croatia, of Konstantinos Diogenes patrikios and strategos of Serbia, and later *strategos* of Sirmium, as well as of the protospatharios Nikolaos who was appointed as *strategos* of Serbia, confirm the political situation in the Balkans as noted in the sources.[242]

[239] For more details about this embassy see Georgije Ostrogorski, "Srpsko poslanstvo caru Vasiliju II", in *Vizantija i Sloveni* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1970), 147-158.

[240] *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 126-127. See also Stjepan Antoljak, *Srednovekovna Makedonija* Tom I (Skopje: Misla, 1985), 381-385.; Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 284-285.

[241] For the Serbian principalities in *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 131. About Croatia see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 345. Also, Budak, *Prva Stoljeća Hrvatske*, 36.; Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 285.

[242] For more details see Krsmanović, *The Byzantine Province in Change*, 199.

Battle for the Balkans: Basileios II and Samuil Kometopoulos

"Samuil who was invincible in power and unsurpassed in strength"
Life of St. Nikon the Metanoiete, 43

The removal of the imperial insignia from the Bulgarian emperor Boris II according to the ideological principle of *oikonomia*,[243] during the triumphal ceremony organized in honour of the victory over Svyatoslav, the prince of Rus, and its placement on the altar in the cathedral church of Saint Sophia, according to Byzantine political theory, was a public statement and confirmation that Bulgaria was subjugated and transformed into a province. The conferring of the title of *magistros* to the now dethroned Bulgarian emperor Boris[244] also had its own symbolism. It actually denoted the position that now belonged to him - a court dignitary subordinated to the only legitimate ruler on Earth, the emperor in Constantinople. From an ideological point of view by these political steps the Byzantines believed that the shattered divine order was re-established and the absorption of Bulgaria within the Byzantine Empire was completely finished, although the sources indicate that this process was far from complete. The *Escorial Taktikon*, a document that is supposed to have been compiled during the reign of Ioannes I Tzimiskes, presents some picture about the extent of the direct Byzantine authority throughout the territory of the now conquered Bulgarian state. Although the numerous archaeological findings from the sites along the lower reaches of the Danube, as well as the large number of seals discovered in Preslav and its surroundings, confirm the reliability of this military-administrative list,[245] nevertheless, the seals of Byzantine military personnel found on the territory of Republic of Serbia,

[243] For more details about the term of *oikonomia* in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* Vol. 3, ed. Alexandar P. Kazhdan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1516-1517.; Also, Srđan Pirivatrić, S*amuilova država. Obim i karakter* (Beograd: Vizantološki institut SANU, 1997), 51-52, n.72.

[244] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 294.

[245] About the Escorial taktikon see Oikonomides, *Les Listes*, 262-273. For more details about archaeological finds and territorial arrangement of the new *themata* see Krsmanović, *The Byzantine Province in Change,* 132-142.

such as that of the *katepano* of Ras and the *strategos* of Morava, indicate that it seems to have been incomplete and did not reliably reflect the situation on the ground.

However, this reintegration process was soon interrupted. After the death of Ioannes I Tzimiskes in the early 976, a civil war between the legal heirs, Basileios and Konstantinos, and Bardas Skleros broke out in the Byzantine Empire.[246] Skylitzes, the main source for this period of Byzantine history,[247] reports that during this conflict in the Balkans "...the Bulgars rebelled, appointing four brothers to rule them: David, Moses, Aaron and Samuil, sons of a count who was one of the powerful men among the Bulgars, Nicholas by name; their mother was Ripseme; that is why they were known as Kometopoloi".[248] This is not the only account about the rebellion of the Kometopouloi in Skylitzes' *Synopsis Historion*. They have been mentioned before in a passage, the main purpose of which is to report the death of the Byzantine princess Maria Lekapena, the wife of the Bulgarian emperor Petar, as well as the renewal of the peace treaty which was highly favourable for the Byzantine Empire – events that happened during 963. The consecutive developments in the Balkans in which afterwards and where the 'children of the komes' who "...were unsettling the Bulgarian lands..." are mentioned at the end, actually indicate that this passage was a thematic piece, or rather a brief overview of the events that took place in the years after the death of Maria Lekapena, ending with 969.[249]

246 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 300-311.

247 For more details about the origin of Skylitzes and the time when he wrote his *Short History* see Catherine Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976-1025)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 80-89. However, as perceived by Holmes, his narrative in the chapters on the Balkan events is largely a confused thematic part whose content indicates on its generalization and compactness, and sometimes is filled with scanty chronological and toponymic data. For analysis of Skylitzes *Synopsis Historion* and its reliability as a source for the events in the Balkans, see Holmes, *Basil II*, 100-109, 162-170.

248 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 312.

249 In this thematic piece Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 246, mentions the death of the Bulgarian emperor Petar, which happened in January 969, six years after Maria Lekapena's death. According to the opinion of Jonathan Shepard, "Byzantium expanding 944-1025", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. III c.900-c.1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 596, as well as Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 241, and Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 58, the Kometopouloi rebelled only once, in 976. They assume that until then the Byzantine Empire had control over this region of the Balkans. For Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 296, after the conquest of Preslav by Ioannes I Tzimiskes in 971, the western regions of the Bulgarian state were left to themselves. Here the remnants of the Bulgarian elite managed to regroup and continue the fight against the Byzantines. Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 68-70, assumes that immediately after the unsettling of the Bulgarian lands by the Kometopouloi in 969, the new Bulgarian emperor Boris II managed to calm the situation. However, he does not provide any explanation for the political status of the region that was the centre of the Kometopouloi revolt between 969 and 976, although he does raise the possibility that nominal Byzantine authority probably existed in this region. Unlike him, Stjepan Antoljak, *Samoilovata država* (Skopje: INI, 1969), 20, and Panov, *Istorija*, 360, assume that after the revolt of 969, in 971, the Kometopouloi recognized the supreme authority of the Byzantine emperor. Treadgold, *History*, 510, as well as the Bulgarian historiographers Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 633-640, Plamen Pavlov, *Vekăt na car Samuil* (Sofia:

Skylitzes, as well as other Byzantine sources that report on the reign of Emperor Basileios II (976-1025), do not contribute to the establishing of the facts regarding the activities of the Kometopouloi between 969 and 976. On the contrary, they complicate things furthermore, not only because of the lack of relevant data which would shed light on the events, but also due to the fact that the Chroniclers denote the rebellion of the Kometopouloi and Samuil's independent reign simply as an apostasy (ἀποστασία), while he is referred as a tyrant.[250] However, with the probable formation of the *katepanikion* of Ras and the *thema* Morava throughout the Serbian regions in 971,[251] as well the arranged marriage between Samuil and Agatha, daughter of a *proteuon* of Dyrrachion,[252] it is hard

Izdatelstvo "Iztok-Zapad", 2014), 81-83, and Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 309-317, consider that these territories acted independently from the Bulgarian capital and survived its conquest by Ioannes I Tzimiskes in 971, thus forming the Western Bulgarian Kingdom.

250 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 246, 312. This is also reported by John Geometres (*FGHB* Tomus V, 317-318.). Kekaumenos in his work *Soveti i Raskazi od Kekavmen*, prev. Jovan Belčovski (Skopje: Makedonika litera, 2015), 218.15, names Samuil as a tyrant, but in the classical sense of the word: as a rebel and usurper. For the Byzantine ideological construction of Samuil as a rebel and a tyrant, see Mitko B. Panov, *The Blinded State. Historiographic Debates about Samuel Cometopoulos and His State (10th-11th Century)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 95-98.; Petăr Angelov, "Car Samuil v predstavite na Vizantiicite", in *Evropeiskiiat iugoiztok prez vtorata polovina na X – nachaloto na XI vek. Istoriia i kultura, Mezhdunarodna konferenciia Sofia, 6-8 oktomvri 2014 g.*, săs. Vasil Giuzelev, Georgi N. Nikolov (Sofia: 2015), 258-265. From the point of view of the Byzantine government, naming the uprising of the sons of the *komes* Nicholas as 'rebellion' is more than understandable. Basically, the term ἀποστασία, as well as the word tyrant (τύραννος) in its classical sense denoted an outlaw, a usurper, an unlawful use of a ruling title or an attempt to usurp power against a legitimate ruler. For the Byzantines, things were formally and legally clear. The conquest of the Bulgarian capital Preslav, the capture of the Bulgarian ruler Boris II, as well as the symbolic removal of his imperial insignia and inclusion in the ranks of his subjects, represented, according to the principles of the Byzantine political theory, an establishment of a new order in the Balkans. According to this theory, with this act, all territories previously ruled by the Bulgarian emperor now became imperial provinces, and its population - subjects of the Byzantine emperor. It simultaneously meant that any action aimed at changing the established order was perceived, by the Byzantines, as an illegitimate rebellion against the legal authority of the Byzantine emperor. The rebellion of the Kometopouloi should be seen in that context. Since they were the descendants of a noble who was a subject of the now dethroned Bulgarian emperor, whose revolt in 976 aimed to throw away the Byzantine rule and the order it had established in the Balkans a few years earlier, as well as to establish a new state, it can be concluded that in accordance with this political theory their action could only be characterized as an act of rebellion by the Byzantines, an ἀποστασία of a subject against the legal authority of the emperor. Defining it on an ideological basis, regardless of what the actual situation was in the region after the destruction of the Bulgarian state i.e., whether the imperial control was direct, nominal or only theoretical, besides giving the Byzantine Empire greater legal legitimacy in its efforts to restore the previously established order, it also exerted a certain influence in determining the military and diplomatic methods and means that the imperial government used in its future struggle against Samuil.

251 Hupchick, *The Bulgarian-Byzantine wars*, 251, raises doubts about their existence.

252 For the reasons why the marriage between Samuil and Agatha was arranged, as well as the theory that it was concluded in 969-972, see Gjalevski, "Za brakot na Samuil i Agata", 78-89. According to Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 78, an approximate *terminus ante quem* for the marriage is 976-978. For Milan Boškoski, *Velikanite na makedonskiot sreden vek* (Skopje: Makedonska reč, 2007), 45, they were married between 972 and 975. John V. A. Fine Jr., *The Early Medieval Balkans – A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth*

to believe that the Byzantine government would have left out the territory between these two *themata* and the *thema* Thessalonike from its political plans, whatever they may have been. Nevertheless, what can be confirmed with certainty is that in 976, after the rebellion of the sons of the *komes* Nicholas, a new state was created in the Balkans.

Immediately after the creation of this state, in his *Synopsis Historion* Skylitzes reports that "...when the death of the emperor Ioannes occurred, when Skleros rebelled against the emperor and their relative Basileios invaded the regions of Thrace, Boris and Roman [the dethroned princes] escaped [from the capital] and managed to arrive in Bulgaria".[253] Yahya of Antioch also writes about this event, presenting additional details. According to him, the sons of the Bulgarian emperor Petar were kept in the Great Palace in Constantinople, and they escaped from captivity with the horses they had kept ready for that purpose.[254] Unlike him, Skylitzes reports that the brothers ran away the moment they were given the chance.[255] Nevertheless, there are several elements in this event which indicate that the escape could not be so easily accomplished. First among these are the actual events in Constantinople. At a time when a civil war was raging and the Kometopouloi were ravaging throughout the Balkans, it is unlikely that Boris and Roman, who had exceptional political value as heirs to the Bulgarian throne, would have been left to move freely around the city. Second is the successful crossing of the Thracian region carried out at a time when there was a large movement of Byzantine military forces. It is also necessary to point that the Great Palace was not a single building, but a complex of objects protected by high walls, further strengthened and raised, and secured by a military guard during the time of Nikephoros II Phokas.[256] This escape, in fact, looks more like a deliberate Byzantine diplomatic step which was aimed at creating discord and starting a struggle for supremacy with the Kometopouloi by highlighting Boris' right of supreme power, which would then lead not only to the gradual weakening of their military power, but also to the gradual fading of the rebellion itself.

The Byzantine sources, as well as those of eastern origin reporting on the Balkans' events in the period from the formation of Samuil's State until its collapse, are quite con-

Century (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 195.; Jonathan Shepard, "Equilibrium to Expansion (886-1025)", in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500-1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 526.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkans Frontier*, 61, and Pavlov, *Vekăt na car Samuil*, 112, 176, only mention the wedding of Samuil and Agatha.

253 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 312.

254 Viktor R. Rozen, *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica. Izvlechenija iz Letopisi Iahii Antiohiiskago* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1883), 20.28-21.15.

255 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 312.

256 About strengthening of the walls of the Great Palace by Nikephoros II Phokas and the citizens' perception of about its construction see *Leo the Deacon*, 113.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 312.

tradictory and scanty in data for some years, presenting only a general picture, without showing more detailed information about the course of events. They depict this four-decade conflict in such a manner that it is easy to assume that the two states were on a constant aggressive warpath, where warfare was inevitable and continuous, the battles fierce and bloody, and their sovereigns presented as fearless warriors always prepared to fight. Such is the image of Emperor Basileios II,[257] as well as of Samuil.[258] However, if one looks at those same texts, it can be concluded that this conflict was not only characterized by "eternal" warfare and fierce battles, but also by the use of various means that were part of diplomacy and which sometimes replaced the actions of the Byzantine military forces on the field. The use of "sophisticated" methods by this Byzantine emperor throughout his military activities is also indicated by Michael Psellos, according to whom, despite the extraordinary military knowledge of Basileios II, he "...preferred not to engage in combat personally. A sudden retreat might otherwise prove embarrassing. [Instead] he was more of a villain in wartime".[259]

It can be concluded from the material and written sources that the imperial policy towards the Balkans during the rebellion of Bardas Skleros, as well as after his defeat[260] until 986, was exclusively defensive and relied on strong fortifications and local thematic forces. While the Byzantine government's use of this defensive strategy during a period of internal unrest is understandable, its implementation from 980 to 986 is somewhat surprising. It is hardly likely that losses in human resources were the only reason for mili-

[257] According to the words of Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 313, 321, 330, Basileios II was "...eager to restrain [Samuil] from his activities..." and for that purpose "...continued to invade Bulgaria every year without interruption, laying waste everything that came to hand". For Basileios II as a ruthless military ruler, see Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije*, 294.; Jenkins, *Byzantium: The imperial Centuries*, 300-301, 311-327. One such image also presents Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 132. During the last few decades this has been disputed, especially by Paul Stephenson, *The legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 32-35, who indicates a significant divergence between the conquests and his later reign. See Catherine Holmes, "How the East was won in the reign of Basil II", in *Eastern approaches to Byzantium: papers from the Thirty-third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, March 1999*, ed. Anthony Eastmond (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 41-56.

[258] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 313, reports that the Kometopoulos Samuil "...was much given to waging war and not at all to possessing his soul in peace". *The Life of Saint Nikon*, tr. Dennis F. Sullivan (Brookline: Hellenic College Press, 1987), 149, which was written at a time when Samuil's military campaigns were still fresh in people's memories, indicates that he "...was invincible in power and unsurpassed in strength". Georgius Monachus Continuatus (*FGHB* Tomus VI, 155.) had the same perception. He was named by *Kekavmen*, 120.21-22, as "skilled in strategy".

[259] *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, her. Diether Roderich Reinsch (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), I.33-34. For the general characteristics of the Byzantine policy, see Dragan Gjalevski, "Byzantine politics of "Sword and Letter" – The case of Samuel", *Journal of History* 48, no.1 (2013): 65-77.

[260] Although the usurpation attempt was thwarted in 979, as reported by Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 309-310, the sources however, provide no indication that for the next seven years, until the Battle of Trajan's Gate in 986, Basileios II took any offensive action in the Balkans against the Kometopouloi.

tary passivity in the Balkans, although this assumption should not be ruled out due to the reduced army forces. Archaeological findings in Preslav indicate that immediately after the civil war, a process of reorganization of the Byzantine provinces in the Balkans began, especially the regions that suffered the most from Samuil's incursions and plundering: Thrace and the areas of eastern medieval Macedonia.[261]

Armenian sources also report about the use of diplomatic measures by the Byzantine government in its fight against the Kometopouloi during this period. According to the report of Step'anos Taronec'i - Asoghik, Samuil and Aaron sent a peace offer to the emperor Basileios II, asking for his sister as a bride. If the source can be believed, in the beginning of 986, before the siege of Serdica, as a response to the offer, the Byzantine emperor sent envoys led by the metropolitan of Sebasteia to the court of the Kometopouloi in order "...to make peace". However, instead of sending his sister, Asoghik says that Basileios II sent "...a woman from his servants, similar in appearance to his sister..." with the metropolitan.[262] After seeing the deception of the emperor, the two brothers, Samuil and Aaron, burned the metropolitan of Sebasteia after previously condemning him as a dog and as deceitful. Although this story does contain several naive elements, in his work Step'anos Taronec'i also presents information about other events that happened during this period which can be confirmed through other sources, thus supporting the reliability of his statement that some diplomatic contacts between Emperor Basileios II and the Kometopouloi were conducted.[263] Matthew of Edessa corroborates his statement that some diplomatic steps were undertaken by the Byzantines. According to him, before the battle at the Trajan Gates in 986, Basileios II sent a diplomatic envoy to the Kometopouloi and asked Samuil and the other *archons* in his country "...to come and prostrate themselves before his imperial majesty".[264]

The use of diplomatic means was not limited only to the central government, but as Kekaumenos reports, they were also conducted by the border *strategoi*, mostly on their own initiative. His grandfather Kekaumenos, who was *strategos* of Hellada in the early 980s, managed to defend Larissa from Samuil's attacks so that "...sometimes he fought against him, and sometimes he moderated him [as well as] his associates by mediation of gifts". Kekaumenos further reports that his grandfather even temporarily submitted

[261] For more details about the administrative reorganization of the Balkans *themata* during this period of Basileios II's reign see Krsmanović, *The Byzantine Province in Change*, 148-163. Also, Holmes, *Basil II*, 402-406.

[262] *The Universal History of Step'anos Tarōnec'i*, intr., tr. and comm. by Tim Greenwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 283.

[263] *Step'anos Tarōnec'i,* 285, reports on the battle at Trajan's Gate, which ended in a catastrophic defeat for the Byzantines.

[264] *Armenia and the Crusades. Tenth to Twelfth Centuries. The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, tr. Ara E. Dostourian (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), 40.

to Samuil in order to prepare the city for a longer siege, for which he had previously informed the emperor, from whom he had obtained an approval. Having succeeded in his purpose and collecting enough food, he threw off the authority of the Kometopouloi. But after three years he was replaced. Since the new appointed *strategos* of the *thema* Hellada could not devise a novel stratagem, Kekaumenos indicates that after a three-year long siege the city of Larissa was finally conquered in 986 by Samuil Kometopoulos.[265]

It should be noted that despite some inconsistencies and vagueness, as well as absence of precise chronological dating, the events witnessed in the sources, if one discards the fabled parts, unequivocally indicate that there was increased Byzantine diplomatic activity in the Balkans between 976 and 986, the purpose of which was to prevent any further military aggression of the Kometopouloi. Even John Skylitzes, in some manner indirectly reports that „...because he [Aaron Kometopoulos] was said to be pro-Roman..."[266] there were contacts conducted between the Kometopouloi and the Byzantine government, probably the same ones attested in the Armenian sources.[267] Apparently, the reason that Emperor Basileios II was "...roused to greater anger than was proper or provident..."[268] so that he was more than usually "...eager to restrain [Samuil] from his activities..."[269] was not only due to the failure of these negotiations, but also because of the different measures taken by his subjects during the previous years, e.g., the payment of large sums of gold as bribes or the bestowal of rich gifts. Eager to punish the defiance of the Kometopouloi, the Byzantine emperor started preparing for an extensive military campaign aimed at the city of Serdica, which was under the enemy's control.[270]

The defeat of Basileios II at Trajan's Gate led to a new internal disturbance in the Byzantine Empire and shift of the imperial government interests from the Balkans to the provinces of Asia Minor, where Bardas Skleros tried again to claim the Byzantine throne. Bardas Phokas who was sent to stop the usurper, also rebelled and proclaimed himself an emperor. Aided by the local elite in Anatolia, he succeeded in suppressing Skleros and becoming the only contender for the highest power in the Byzantine Empire. During the next few years Basileios II did not focus on the conflict with Samuil[271] as a result of the

[265] *Kekavmen*, 218.14-220.16.

[266] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 312.

[267] *Matthew of Edessa, 40.; Step'anos Tarōnec'i*, 283.

[268] *Leo the Deacon*, 213.

[269] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 313.

[270] For the Byzantine siege of Serdica in 986 see *Leo the Deacon*, 213-214.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 313.; Rozen, *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 31.15-22.

[271] During the next few years, due to imperial passivity, he not only continued to ravage the Byzantine provinces, but also managed to bring under his authority the regions north of the Haimos mountain range, as well as the cities of Berrœa and Servia in Macedonia. For the region north of Haimos see Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 95.; Treadgold, *History*, 519. For Berrœa in *Leo the Deacon*, 217. For Servia see *Kekavmen*, 142.18-144.12.

outbreak of a new, second civil war.[272] After the situation in the state had been pacified, he again turned his attention to the Balkans in the last decade of the 10th century. However, as a result of the military supremacy of the Kometopoulos, his military actions were mostly defensive, aimed at strengthening the security of the remaining Byzantine provinces. Between 991 and 995 the Byzantine emperor fought against Samuil in the vicinity of Thessalonica where, despite the early initiative and temporary conquest of Berrœa and several other unnamed fortresses in the area, he did not achieve any significant success.[273] However, some sources inform that during this period the Byzantine emperor started to establish contacts with Samuil's neighbours.

In an attempt to change the political situation in his favour, Basileios II used the only means suggested by the anonymous author of the military treatise *On Strategy* when faced with a more powerful opponent: establishing of diplomatic contacts and forming of a military alliance with some of the enemy's neighbours who also felt threatened by the rise of the enemy's military power. A charter from the Great Lavra of St. Athanasius on Mount Athos mentions that in the early 990s, or more precisely in 992/993, the Byzantine emperor was visited by an unnamed Serbian envoy in his military camp near Thessalonica.[274] The fact that this Serbian embassy actually represented a response of a previous diplomatic initiative by Emperor Basileios II suggest the events that followed their capture by the Saracens on the island of Gymnopelagysion near Lemnos. The way in which the Byzantine emperor reacted when he learned about the capture of these Serbian envoys and the speed with which they were released (for this purpose Basileios II sent a special envoy),[275] as well as their direct departure to the imperial camp, located at that time in the vicinity of Thessalonica, indicate that he probably not only expected the arrival of these envoys but it appears that he also knew the purpose of their journey, which again implies to the conclusion that these official

[272] About the civil war between Basileios II and Bardas Phokas see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 314-321. For analysis see Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 94-95.; Stephenson, B*yzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 59-60.; Shepard, "Byzantium expanding", 596-597.

[273] For this campaign, see Yahya in Rozen, *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 27.34-28.15; *Step'anos Tarōnec'i*, 296-297. Unlike them Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 323, notes it in just a few sentences. About Basileios II's reduced diplomatic activity in this period of the conflict and the reasons behind that, see Gjalevski, "Byzantine politics", 71.

[274] About the Serbian envoys that were dispatched to the emperor Basileios II in 992 see Ostrogorski, "Srpsko poslanstvo",147-158. It is not known where these envoys came from. But because Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 335, mentions that Vladimir, the prince of Diocleia, who was "...a man of integrity, peace and virtue...." and during this period he reigned over "...Tribalia and the nearer parts of Serbia...", the Serbian envoys were probably sent by him. This precedence of the Diocleian ruler is also confirmed in *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 122-123, 125, where it is reported that the great *župan* of Rascia, the second most important Serbian principality, was politically dependent on him.

[275] Ostrogorski, "Srpsko poslanstvo", 148.

negotiations were prompted not by Diocleia, the leading Serbian principality in that period, but by the Byzantine Empire.

The change of the military and political situation in the Balkans in favour of the Byzantine government began soon after the disastrous defeat of Samuil at the river Spercheios.[276] Although this defeat did not lead to the destruction of his military power, it nevertheless represented a serious setback for his political aspirations because after this event the sources no longer report about his marauding incursions in the vicinity of Thessalonica, or throughout Thessaly and all the way to Peloponnese. Yahya of Antioch gives a clear picture of the power of this defeat and the political position in which Samuil probably found himself after Spercheios. According to his account, he tried to minimize the impact of the defeat by making an agreement with the Byzantine emperor, promising him obedience.[277] Although the agreement did not materialize, it nevertheless indicates that the Byzantine government was also interested in negotiations. Yahya reports that as soon as the negotiations were terminated, Nikephoros Ouranos entered Samuil's realm where he looted and burned for three whole months without anyone opposing him. Immediately afterwards he retreated back to Constantinople.[278] The way in which this military campaign was carried out without conquering a certain territory, in fact, indicates that it represented a kind of show of military force, a method of intimidation that was supposed to put pressure on the opponent to accept the set conditions, in this case, a continuation of the previously interrupted negotiations.

Powerless to intervene militarily on several fronts at the same time, in an attempt to strengthen its positions in the southern region of the Adriatic Sea, the Byzantine government, apparently, came into contact with Venice, which was perceived as an imperial dominion. Sources report of more intense contacts during the last decade of the 10th century. According to these, in 992, the emperors Basileios II and Konstantinos VIII (1025-1028) issued a chrysobull to Venice by which the taxes on their merchant ships in Constantinople were reduced. This was preceded by a Byzantine envoy in 991, sent in honour of the enthronement of the new *doge* Pietro II Orseolo (991-1008). It is highly probable that, besides the honouring of the new Venetian *doge*, this visit was also used for discussing topics of exceptional interest for both sides, either from an economic or some other aspect.[279] The stay of Giovanni Orseolo, the son of the Venetian *Doge*, in the camp of the Byzantine emperor during 997 only complements this assumption, since immediately

276 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 324.

277 Rozen, *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 34.16-18.

278 Ibid, 34.22-26.

279 For the visit of the Byzantine envoys to Venice in Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 40-42. About the issued chrysobull see also Holmes, *Basil II*, 493.

after his meeting with Basileios II, the *doge* of Venice supplemented his title *dux Venetiorum* with *et Dalmatianorum*, and during the last years of the 10th and beginning of the 11th century his fleet operated throughout the Adriatic coast. These events point to the possibility that the Byzantine Empire granted the administration of *thema* Dalmatia to Pietro II Orseolo, and the naval patrols that his fleet performed were with prior permission from the central government.[280] The fact that Venice was entrusted with the task of maintaining the maritime security in the Adriatic region is also indicated by the help it provided for the Byzantine forces in Southern Italy against the Arab attack on the city of Bari in 1003, or in the *thema* Longobardia just a year later.[281] Soon afterwards, in 1004 or 1005, the city of Dyrrachion was reconquered by the Byzantines with help of the local elite led by the ruling family of Chyselios, which seems to have suffered heavy financial losses from the years of naval blockade.[282] Due to the fact that during this period the Venice fleet sailed across the Adriatic Sea, it is likely that the Byzantine vessels noted patrolling around this city in Skylitzes' *Synopsis Historion* were the same ships i.e., the Venetian ships sailing under the banner of the Byzantine emperor.

Skylitzes himself indicates that the Byzantine government saw Venice as an important ally through which it could realize its interests on the Adriatic. According to him "...the emperor gave the daughter of Argyros (sister of the Romanos [III Argyros] who later reigned as emperor) in lawful marriage to the Doge of Venice to conciliate the Venetians".[283] Since this marriage was concluded during 1005 or 1006, right after the military campaigns in Bari and Dyrrachion, it probably represented a kind of a token of gratitude for the Venetian help provided to the Byzantine Empire in the Adriatic Sea, specifically in the region of Dalmatia, Southern Italy and, apparently, during the conquest of the city of Dyrrachion.[284] It seems that the marriage between the future Venetian *doge* Giovanni Orseolo and a lady from the Argyros family, the economic privileges of the Venetian merchants in Constantinople, as well the conferred title et *Dalmatianorum*, were in fact all diplomatic means used by the Byzantines to obtain, but also to reward, the loyalty of Venice.

Besides in Diocleia and Venice, the Byzantine Empire also extended its diplomatic contacts north of the Danube. Throughout the eight-month siege of Vidin in 1002,

[280] For the administration of the thema Dalmatia by the Venetian *Doge* at the end of the 10th century, see Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava u Dalmaciji*, 90-91.; Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 107-109, n.114. According to the assumption of Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice*, 43-44, it was an independent Venetian expedition.

[281] For the Arab attacks in Southern Italy during the last decade of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century see Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice*, 45.; Holmes, *Basil II*, 437, 504.; Treadgold, *History*, 525.

[282] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 325.

[283] Ibid, 325.

[284] Holmes, *Basil II*, 504.; Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice*, 45-46.; Jenkins, *Byzantium: The imperial Centuries*, 325-326.

Basileios II came into contact with the local Magyar leader Ajtony (Achtum), whose territory was situated around Körön River, north of this city. At his own request, Ajtony was received by the imperial officials and baptized according to the Orthodox rituals.[285] This political rapprochement was due to a mutual benefit. While Ajtony with this alliance probably tried to hold on to its own political autonomy, which was threatened by the centralist tendencies of the Hungarian king,[286] the aim of Emperor Basileios II was to provide not only an increased safety for the territory north of Haimos which was reoccupied two years earlier, but also to commit pressure on the king of Hungary who was allied with Samuil by a dynastic marriage,[287] through the separatist tendencies of this Magyar leader a kind of political measure that would prevent any future Hungarian military aid to the Kometopoulos. That this Byzantine policy of pressure proved successful and led to the dissolution of the alliance informs Skylitzes (more precisely Michael of Deabolis) who states that Gavril Radomir „...for reasons unknown to me he took to hating her and sent [the Hungarian princess] away when she was already pregnant to him".[288] Although it is not confirmed in the source material, it's easy to assume that the reason for this step on behalf of Gavril was probably the failure to meet the terms of the concluded alliance and the gradual inclination of the kingdom of Hungary towards the Byzantine Empire.[289] If the Latin sources are to be believed, the Byzantine diplomacy actually managed to completely turn the political situation in the trans-Danube region in its favour. According to them, the Byzantine emperor managed to win over King Stephen, who in turn helped him militarily in conquering the territories that were under the rule of Samuil and his successors.[290]

[285] Shepard, "Byzantium expanding 944-1025", 598-599.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 65.

[286] Ajtony's act of baptism was actually a political step through which he wanted to show his opposition and refusal to accept the supreme authority of King Stephen. For the situation in Hungary during the first years of King Stephen's reign, see Kornél Bakay, "Hungary", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. III c.900-c.1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 547-549. See also Risto Iljovski, "Vizantisko-Ungarski sojuz vo početokot na XI vek protiv Samoil i negovite naslednici", *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 29-30 (1991): 88-89. According to Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 65, Ajtony controlled the salt trade through the rivers Maros and Tisza, all the way to Szeged.

[287] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 332. Samuil's son Gavril Radomir was probably married to Geza's daughter i.e., to the sister of the Hungarian king Stephen. See Iljovski, "Vizantisko-Ungarski sojuz", 75-98.; Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert Publisher, 1970), 62.

[288] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 332..

[289] The same assumption was put forth by Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 62.; Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 119.; Boškoski, *Velikanite*, 113.

[290] For more details about Basileios II's alliance with the Magyars, and later with King Stephen in *FLHB* Tomus II, 373. For this alliance, see also in the life of Stephen (*FLHB* Tomus II, 382-383.). There are different dating's for King Stephen's participation in the Byzantine struggle against Samuil. For these see Ian Mladjov, "Bulgarians and Magyars as allies and rivals across the early medieval frontier", in *Evropeiskiiat iugoiztok prez vtorata polovina na X – nachaloto na XI vek. Istoriia i kultura, Mezhdunarodna konferenciia Sofia, 6-8*

With the beginning of the new millennium, the Byzantine military fortunes changed. The conflict with the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim on the eastern border over Syria and the city of Aleppo finally ended. During 1000 or 1001 a ten-year peace agreement was concluded, renewed again in 1011 and 1023.[291] This state of peace that was established on the eastern frontier allowed the Byzantine Empire to fully focus its political interests on the Balkan regions, where Samuil was still opposing. This is reported by Skylitzes. He states how "...in AM 6508, thirteenth year of the indiction, the emperor sent a large and powerful force against the Bulgar strongholds beyond the Haemos range, under the command of the patrikios Theodorokanos and the protospatharios, Nikephoros Xiphias. Greater and Lesser Preslav were taken; Pliskova too; then the Roman army returned, triumphant and intact".[292]

Skylitzes, as well as Yahya of Antioch, give an impression that starting from 1001 until the conquest of Samuil's State in 1018, the Byzantine emperor waged a protracted and bloody war of gradual and systematic conquest of enemy fortresses and territories through the implementation of a superior strategy and warfare tactics. Yahya describes how "...the emperor returned to Bulgaria to fight and stayed there for four years and won a complete victory, killing and plundering. And he conquered many fortresses, some of which he destroyed, and others he kept for himself".[293] Unlike him, Skylitzes presents more details about the course of this war, but according to his narration it can be concluded that it lasted continuously for eighteen years, until the final subjugation of Samuil's State.[294]

If one follows Skylitzes summarized narrative of the Byzantine offensive from 1001 to 1005, it is evident that a significant part of the success that Basileios II achieved against Samuil during these years was not only through military forces and sieges,[295] but also with the help of diplomatic means. According to the source material "...Dobromir,

oktomvri 2014 g., săs. Vasil Giuzelev, Georgi N. Nikolov (Sofia: 2015), 71-76.; Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 62.; Iljovski, "Vizantisko-Ungarski sojuz", 95-97.; Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 118-119, n.145-146.; Antoljak, *Srednovekovna Makedonija* Tom I, 456-457.

[291] Holmes, *Basil II*, 349, 478.

[292] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 326. On the territorial administration of the regions north of the Haimos mountain range after its conquest by the Byzantine army see Krsmanović, *The Byzantine Province in Change*, 161, n.370.

[293] Rozen, *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 42.24-29.

[294] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 330, reports that Basileios II "...continued [even after 1004] to invade Bulgaria every year without interruption".

[295] Serbia and Vodena were conquered by the Byzantines after a previously conducted siege, which in the case of Vidin lasted as long as eight months. The fortress of Kolydros, governed by Demetrios Teichonas, was captured by the Byzantines after the successful negotiations with the defenders and the given permission to withdraw unharmed. According to Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 326-328, the emperor Basileios II defeated Samuil in the vicinity of Skopje.

governor of Berroea, who was married to a niece of Samuil, joined the emperor's ranks and surrendered his town to him, for which he was honoured with the title of anthypatos/proconsul".[296] In an identical way, the Byzantine emperor captured Skopje, where the city "...was handed over to the emperor by Roman [was the son of King Petar of the Bulgars and the brother of Boris] whom Samuil had appointed as its governor...the emperor rewarded his submission with the titles of patrikios and praipositos, awarding him a command of Abydos".[297] These military successes exerted a strong influence on part of the Samuil's elite, so that Dyrrachion was soon brought back under Byzantine control by the conferring of the titles of *patrikios* to Chryselios' two sons, who was the city's *proteuon* and father of Agatha, wife of Samuil. Also, during the siege of the city of Pernikos which was under the command of Krakras, a man with exceptional knowledge of military skills, "... [Basileios II] spent considerable time laying siege to that place and lost quite a number of men". Unfortunately, "...realising that the defence-works were too good to be taken by siege..." the Byzantine emperor tried to draw Krakras' attention "...by flattery, promises or other suggestions".[298] It can be noted from the previously discussed events, that Basileios II achieved his conquests mostly by bribing the enemy's commanders and region's governors with imperial aulic titles. However, as in the case of Krakras, the commander of Pernikos, these diplomatic means were not always successful.

Despite the military effort and diplomatic contacts that were undertaken by the Byzantine government throughout this campaign, during the next ten years situation in the Balkans remained unchanged. Although Skylitzes informs that "...the emperor continued to invade Bulgaria every year without interruption, laying waste everything that came to hand..."[299] he is silent on the progress of these offensive campaigns and does not report about any new conquests by the Byzantines.[300] Matthew of Edessa, a later Arme-

296 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 326.

297 Skylitzes, Synopsis, 328-329. That Roman, governor of Skopje, was the son of the Bulgarian emperor Petar is also reported by Zonarae, *Epitome Historiarum*, 119. Unlike them, Yahya, in Rozen, I*mperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 28.4-6, 34.28-30, indicates that Roman, the son of Petar, was captured and imprisoned by the Byzantines in 991, where he died during 997.

298 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 329.

299 Ibid, 330.

300 Although the city of Dyrrachion was conquered, Skylitzes reports that the region around it remained under Samuil's authority and was governed by the *archon* of Diocleia. According to *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 127, Vladimir ruled not only his lands but also "...the entire Dyrrachian region". Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 335, notes that "...as long as Vladimir, the husband of Samuil's daughter, was ruling Tribalia and the nearer parts of Serbia, things were calm at Dyrrachion". The meagre description in the *Synopsis Historion of Skylitzes* has led to the establishment of several assumptions which attempt to shed some light on this period. Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil*, 69, 71-72, assumes that Samuil and Basileios II agreed for a 10-year truce in 1005. A similar opinion is held by Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 389, according to whom, in 1006-1007 Samuil agreed to subjugate and a peace was concluded which lasted until the renewal of the war in 1014. In contrast, Holmes,

nian source from the 12th century, and the *Life* of St. Nikon Metanoeite, also indicate that some Byzantine military measures were taken against Samuil in this period, which somewhat confirms Skylitzes' report.[301] Matthew of Edessa reports that "...in the year 455 of the Armenian era [1006-1007] the emperor Basileios gathered troops from all the lands of his empire and, moving forth, went against the country of the Bulgars. He spent much time in that country, conducting an extensive war".[302]

It is more likely that the fighting between Samuil and Basileios II continued, but it was not a protracted all-out war, but most likely, it was a conflict of lesser intensity that lasted for years and was fought using guerrilla tactics, a show of military force on the ground, occasional raids and frequent border skirmishes between the enemies. However, as a result of the limited intensity of these clashes, they could not lead to a drastic change in the political map of the Balkans, except for an attrition of the opponent without any major human losses among the Byzantine army. This is also noted by Skylitzes according to whom, "...Samuil could do nothing in open country nor could he oppose the emperor in formal battle. He was shattered on all fronts and his own forces were declining, so he decided to close the way into Bulgaria with ditches and fences".[303] But despite this constant military pressure, it seems that Samuil had quite successfully resisted the attacks, so that the political situation remained *de facto* unchanged within the borders of the Byzantine conquests that ended in 1005.

The Byzantine government was given a chance to change the situation on the Balkan Peninsula in its favour after the victory over Samuil at Kleidion on July 29 1014, and his death which occurred soon afterwards, just a few months later.[304] Sources report that the Byzantine Empire immediately took advantage of the psychological moment that arose after these events and conquered the city of Melnikos through diplomatic means. Skylitzes writes that the emperor Basileios II sent to the people of the fortress "...Sergios, a eunuch and one of his most intimate chamberlains, an able man and a fine speaker, to test their state of mind. When he got there, he managed (by the use of many persuasive arguments) to convince the men of what they had to do: to lay down their arms and surrender to the emperor both themselves

Basil II, 498, believes that the warfare continued, but with reduced intensity.

301 For the ideological dimension of the conflict between Basileios II and Samuil, see Mitko B. Panov, "Ideološkata dimenzija na sudirot pomegju Vasilij II i Samuil", *Spektar* 57/1 (2011): 6-15.

302 *Matthew of Edessa*, 41.; *Saint Nikon*, 149.

303 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 330.

304 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 331. For a detailed analysis of the battle at Kleidion, see Maciej Salamon, "The Belasitza battle or Belasitza military operation?", in *Evropeiskiiat iugoiztok prez vtorata polovina na X – nachaloto na XI vek. Istoriia i kultura, Mezhdunarodna konferenciia Sofia, 6-8 oktomvri 2014 g.*, săs. Vasil Giuzelev, Georgi N. Nikolov (Sofia: 2015), 108-140.; Tomo Tomov, "Bitkata pri Kliuch prez 1014 g.", in *Evropeiskiiat iugoiztok prez vtorata polovina na X – nachaloto na XI vek. Istoriia i kultura, Mezhdunarodna konferenciia Sofia, 6-8 oktomvri 2014 g.*, săs. Vasil Giuzelev, Georgi N. Nikolov (Sofia: 2015), 142-166.

and the fortress. These the emperor received and rewarded them accordingly".[305] An additional psychological effect for them to accept the offer was probably the knowledge that the prisoners of war were blinded on an order by the Byzantine emperor.[306]

After the death of Samuil, sources note that the Byzantine Empire took a more offensive attitude towards his successors, not only on the battlefield, but also in the use of diplomatic means. Instead of continuing to convince the enemy commanders while simultaneously conducting military campaigns, an approach widely used during the reign of Samuil, Basileios II started to implement more aggressive measures. The reason for this change is written by Skylitzes in his *Synopsis Historion*. According to him, Gavril "... surpassed his father in vigour and strength but was sadly inferior to him in wisdom and understanding".[307] The Priest of Diocleia presents an identical information.[308] This passage in Skylitzes indicates that Samuil's son did not have the influence and power that his father had, and that Gavril had yet to establish his full authority over Samuil's nobles. It must be noted that during the Middle Ages the change of power in a state very often led to a temporary weakening of its political and military might until the crown prince took the power firmly in his hands.[309] The events that followed the death of Samuil indicate that Basileios II was apparently aware of this fact. He immediately left Mosynoupolis and through Thessalonica proceeded "...to Pelagonia, destroying nothing on the way except that he burnt the palace of Gavril at Voutele. He sent out troops which took the fortresses of Prilapon and Stypeion, then he came to the river called Tzernas which he crossed on rafts and inflated bladders, then he returned to Vodena and from there to Thessalonica where he arrived on the ninth of January".[310]

Although at first sight it seems that the Byzantine emperor began the military campaign with intention of waging war, Skylitzes' report that it was conducted hastily during the winter and that nothing was destroyed except Gavril's palace, an act that seems to have had more political than military motive (exerting additional political pres-

[305] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 333.

[306] For the blinding of Samuil's soldiers by Basileios II after the battle at Belasitza, see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 331. This act, according to Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 331, 335, 338, was repeated several times at Lake Ostrovos, Soskos and the plain of Pelagonia. The Byzantine emperor also used this means of intimidation against the rebellious Iberians, whose territory was handed over to him by the *kouropalates* David. For the campaign of Emperor Basileios II against George of Abasgia, see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 346. On the blinding of the Iberian captives see Holmes, *Basil II*, 529.

[307] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 332.

[308] According to *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 127, Gavril Radomir "...was very strong and fought many battles against the Greeks during the time of the Greek emperor Basileios".

[309] That transfer of power was known to be a problematic process is indicated by the events surrounding the ascension of the Bulgarian emperor Petar to power. See Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 73.

[310] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 333.

sure on the new ruler), nevertheless leads to the conclusion that the purpose of this campaign was more of a show of Byzantine military force rather than conquest of enemy territory.[311] It seems that the cities that were temporarily conquered were also a kind of exploitation of the opportunity that was offered to Emperor Basileios II due to an absence of any resistance from the opponent. Thus, Skylitzes' testimony about Gavril's offer for submission to the Byzantine emperor should also be observed in that context.[312]

With the help of diplomatic measures Basileios II succeeded to directly influence the change of power in Samuil's State. One year after the death of Samuil, the Priest of Diocleia reports about the contacts established between the Byzantine emperor and Jovan Vladislav, son of Aaron, aimed in shaking the reign of Samuil's son, Gavril Radomir. This move had paid off. In his *Synopsis Historion* Skylitzes notes that Jovan Vladislav informed Basileios II in a letter of how Gavril "...had been slain by him at Peteriskon and that plenary power had been passed to him..." while promising to show "...proper degree of respect and servitude to the emperor".[313]

Jovan Vladislav's attempts to seize the supreme authority by murdering Gavril Radomir apparently further worsened the strained relations that existed between the nobles. The deteriorating internal relations, as well as the heavy military pressure from Basileios II, were in fact the main reasons that led to the accelerated disintegration of Samuil's State, only four years after the death of the man who established it. With his death in 1018 under the walls of Dyrrachion, the political fragmentation in Samuil's State was complete. While Vladislav's widow, Maria, entered into an open conflict over the inheritance with the rest of her relatives and claimants to the throne, a large number of nobles and governors of cities, for instance Krakras, Dragomouz and Bogdan, realizing that they were no longer able to continue to resist as a result of the disunity, subjugated to the Byzantine emperor who was marching from Adrianoupolis at the head of a large army.[314] Soon, the rest of the members of the Samuil's elite, as well as the members of the ruling family, surrendered to Basileios II, who generously rewarded their obedience with aulic titles, which now made them a part of his imperial retinue.[315]

311 The same conclusion is also presented by Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil*, 26.

312 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 334.

313 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 334. The murder of Gavril Radomir is also reported in *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 127. Even Yahya, in Rozen, *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 58.28-32, knew that Aaron (Jovan Vladislav) had killed the Kometopoulos (Gavril) and promised the emperor "...obedience and friendship". The murder of Jovan Vladimir and the blinding of Gavril's eldest son by Jovan Vladislav is evidence that there were mutual disagreements, disputes and conflicts over the throne. For the murder of Jovan Vladimir see *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 127-129.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 335. About the blinding of Gavril's eldest son, see Skylitzes, Synopsis, 340.

314 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 338-339.

315 Vladislav's eldest sons refused to surrender at first, as did Ibatzes. For these events see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 340-343.

After the death of Jovan Vladislav, the decades-long conflict in the Balkans finally ended, and the Byzantine Empire emerged triumphant from it. The once mighty state of Samuil succumbed to the onslaughts of the emperor in Constantinople. After the final subjugation, the newly conquered territories that previously included Samuil's State were integrated into the Byzantine administrative system. They were divided into two administrative units, the *katepanikion* of Bulgaria with its centre in Skopje, governed by a military commander who had the rank of *doux/katepano*, and the *thema* Sirmium that included the area of Srem, most probably commanded by a *strategos*.[316] Immediately afterwards, Diocleia and the other Serbian principalities, as well as Croatia, recognized the supreme authority of the Byzantine emperor, so that the entire Balkan Peninsula was now under his direct control, for the first time in four centuries.[317]

316 Krsmanović, *The Byzantine Province in Change*, 191-200.
317 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 345.; *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 131-132.

THE DIPLOMATIC MEASURES IN THE PONTIC STEPPE

"From the Danube River to the aforesaid city of Sarkel is a journey of 60 days. In this land between are many rivers: the two biggest of them are the Dniester and the Dnieper. But there are other rivers, that which is called the Syngoul and the Hybyl and the Almatai and the Kouphis and the Bogou and many others. On the higher reaches of the Dnieper River live the Russians, and down this river they sail and arrive at the Romans. Patzinacia possesses all the land as far as Russia and Bosporus and as far as Cherson and up to Sarat, Bourat and the 30 places"

Porphyrogennetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, 42.55-64

During the Middle Ages, the Danube River was not only a physical border between the Balkan Peninsula and the central regions of Europe, but also a social and political frontier that separated the Christian civilization, of which the Byzantine Empire considered itself the only legitimate representative, from the chaotic forces of barbarism represented by the pagan beliefs and customs. The Pannonian plain, located in the middle course of the Danube River, is physically surrounded by the Carpathian Mountain range in the east and the Alps in the west, and the lowlands in the lower course of this river can be said to represent the end of the "steppe corridor", a huge Eurasian steppe that stretches continuously to the East all the way to the shore of Lake Baikal.[318]

The territories north of the Danube border are regions suitable for a pastoral – cattle-raising – lifestyle. Until the beginning of the 20th century, these steppe regions were exploited by nomadic herders whose economy depended on keeping herds of sheep and horses, constantly changing the place of their grazing depending on the season, thereby avoiding the worst climatic conditions that existed in the steppe. Because of this way of

[318] For more details on the geopolitical map of the Pontic steppe, see Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 24-41.; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 428-429.

life, always on the move, looking for better pastures for their cattle, the nomadic tribes' society was highly fragmented, without a strong central authority and to a large extent egalitarian. But in another aspect, it also led to the formation of a strong military capacity based on horsemanship, archery and endurance, which developed as a result of the necessities of steppe life. These nomads were extremely effective soldiers. Their warbands could vary from small marauding parties of a few hundred to a large raiding force of several tens of thousands of horsemen if these tribes were politically united.[319]

In fact, it can be said that during the late antiquity and medieval period the Pontic steppe represented a kind of a gate that allowed the various peoples and tribes living in the regions north and east of the Black Sea to freely move not only to the mouth of the Danube, but also to the west and south of this river. Crossing this natural, as well as political and civilizational barrier in the Balkans, numerous nomadic tribes and peoples from the steppes, as in the case of the Bulgars, had the opportunity to militarily threaten the region of Thrace, and with-it Constantinople, the seat of the Byzantine emperor, the richest and most advanced metropolis in medieval Europe. The constant Byzantine fear and anxiety of a new barbarian invasion from the north strongly influenced their perception of the peoples living in these regions. At the same time, it strongly influenced the Byzantine foreign policy, which, in turn, was supposed to prevent any hostile activity conducted by these "barbarians" in the future. Evidence that the Byzantine government directed part of its own resources to observe and comprehend the situation in the region north of the Danube and the Black Sea, and then to act accordingly to the possible military danger, is indicated by an important and confidential work that was compiled during the middle of the 10th century known today as *De Administrando Imperio*, which presents a historical and geographical overview of almost all the neighbours of the Byzantine Empire during that period.

From the middle of 9th until the beginning of 11th century, several nations and tribes which lived in the regions north of the Black Sea were direct participants in the military and political events in the Balkans. One of these were the Magyars, named Ungroi (Οὖγγροι), or "Turks" (Τοῦρκοι) by the Byzantines, ancestors of the modern Hungarians, who appeared in the Pontic steppe region during the first decades of the 9th century. In the beginning, they were allies of the Khazars, who only formally recognized their hegemony, but from the middle of the 9th century, these people started to move towards the West, where they reached the mouth of the Danube, conquered the territory north of this river and settled there.[320] However, under the military pressure of their neighbours, they soon left this dwell-

[319] Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 19-25.; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 411-413.

[320] For the period when the Magyars first appear on the historical scene until their migration north of the mouth of the Danube River see Zoltán J. Kosztolnyik, *Hungary under the early Árpáds, 890s to 1063* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 21-31. Florin Curta, *Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages (500-1300)* (Leiden:

ing place and migrated even further west, in the Pannonian plain, conquering the regions between rivers Tisza and Danube from the Moravian prince. However, as before, their new home, which was located in Central Europe, was close to the Balkan dominions of the Byzantine emperor, so the Magyars remained, albeit only occasionally, participants in the Balkan's events closely related to the Byzantine policy of reintegration.

At the same time, with the Magyars' settlement in the western areas of the Pontic steppe, and later in the Pannonian plain, another people appeared on the horizon, known from the sources as the Pechenegs. This nomadic tribe, or rather a union of clans of Turkish origin, initially became the dominant force in the region between the Don and the lower reaches of the Volga. However, as a result of the political and military weakening of the Khazars in the middle of the 9th century, their military power soon spread to the West, all the way to the mouth of the Danube River. After the military intervention against the Magyars during the last years of the 9th century, they became the main military and political power in the region north of the Black Sea, controlling the territory from the lower reaches of the Danube River to the mouth of the Volga River, and becoming a significant military factor in the realization of the Byzantine imperial policy against its enemies in the north, as well in the Balkans.[321]

In addition to these two nomadic tribes, the sources report that another group of people directly influenced the events in the Balkans during the period between the middle of 9th and beginning of 11th century. Unlike the Magyars and the Pechenegs who inhabited the vast expanses of the steppe, these people known in the source material under the name *Rus* lived in fortified settlements north of them, throughout the dense forests around the Dnieper and Volga rivers all the way to the Gulf of Finland. In the medieval period, the term *Rus* had several meanings. It could refer to the Slavic tribes of these areas, to their Viking rulers, or to both peoples at the same time. However, when used in a geographical sense, the term Rus denoted a territory that was mostly inhabited

Brill, 2019), 250-256.; Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 37-44.; Bakay, "Hungary", 536-538.; András Róna-Tas, "The Khazars and the Magyars", in *The World of the Khazars: New Perspectives Selected Papers from the Jerusalem 1999 International Khazar Colloquium hosted by the Ben Zvi Institute*, eds. Peter B. Golden, Haggai Ben-Shammai and András Rona-Tas (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 274.; Constantine Zukerman, "`Les Hongrois au pays Lébédia: une nouvelle puissance aux confins de Byzance er de la Khazarie ca. 836-889", in *Byzantium at war: ninth-twelfth century*, ed. Kostas Tsiknakis (Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1997), 51-74.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 153-154.

321 For the Pechenegs see Boris Zhivkov, *Khazaria in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, tr. Daria Manova (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 127-146.; Elisabeth Malamut, "L'Image Byzantine des Petchénègues", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 88 (1995): 105-147.; Florin Curta, "The Image and Archaeology of the Pechenegs", *Banatica* 23 (2013): 143-202, andCurta, *Eastern Europe*, 158-169. On the existence of military cooperation with the Magyars during the 10th century see Andras Paloczi – Horvath, *Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians. Steppe peoples in medieval Hungary* (Budapest: Corvina, 1989), 7-17.

by tribes that spoke the Slavic language. By character, these medieval *Rus* were, in fact, soldier-merchants who mostly acquired their wealth through trade or plunder. As a result of the fact that Constantinople represented not only the largest commercial centre where precious goods and items could be found from all over the known world, but also the richest city in Christendom, their contact with the Byzantines was inevitable.[322]

In relation to the developments in the Pontic steppe Byzantine policy, seen from a military and political aspect, was purely defensive. The Byzantines had no ambition to impose their own hegemony or to conquer the Scythian wilderness, which was never part of the former *Orbis Romanus* i.e., of the civilized world. In fact, from the sources can be clearly observed that the goal of the Byzantine diplomacy towards this region was to maintain a level of military and political balance, a state of equilibrium, which in turn would allow increased security for the imperial territories in the Balkans not only from the enemies that existed in this peninsula, for instance Bulgaria, but also from the raids conducted by the nations and tribes who lived north of the Black Sea.

[322] About the mythological origin of the Rus in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 53-58. About the appearance of the Rus until their first contact with the Byzantine Empire see Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus 750-1200* (Harlow: Longman Group Limited, 1996), 1-50.; Wladyslaw Duczko, *Viking Rus: Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 10-36.; Thomas S. Noonan, "European Russia, C. 500 - C. 1050", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. III c.900-c.1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 505-508.; Curta, *Eastern Europe*, 275-290.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 37-41.

A Problematic ally: The Magyars and the kingdom of Hungary

"Neighbours of the Turks are, on the eastern side the Bulgarians, where the river Istros, also called Danube, runs between them; on the western, the Franks; and on the southern, the Croats"

Porphyrogennetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, 40.41-44

The first signs of decline of the Khazar state which was located in the Pontic and the western part of the Eurasian steppe between the Dnieper and Volga rivers manifested towards the middle of the 9th century. Although the Khazars managed to maintain their authority in its eastern regions until their disappearance as a political power a century later, in the middle of the 10th century, the events that followed from the 9th century indicate that despite the widespread nominal authority of their khagan, the once firm control that this ruler had throughout the steppe region no longer existed. The Khazar state started to act more and more defensively in relation to its neighbours.[323]

The Magyars were probably known to the Byzantines even before the first decades of the 9th century (sources that report on their origin confirm this),[324] but only after they had thrown away Khazar's authority and migrated north of the Danube River delta,[325] this nomadic tribe had attracted the attention of the emperor and became an asset for achieving the imperial interests in the Balkans. Settled near the Bulgarian state, with exceptional horse-riding military skills, like any other steppe tribe, they possessed all the necessary characteristics important for the Byzantine policy of confronting a superior enemy as attested in the military manual *On Strategy*, whose author advised simultaneous warfare on two fronts by inciting the enemy's neighbours and exploiting them in the ensuing battle.[326] Evidence that towards the end of the 9th century the Byzantine govern-

[323] Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 442-445.
[324] On the origin of the Magyar tribal union in *DAI*, 38.3-55.
[325] Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 44-45.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 153-154.; Róna-Tas, "The Khazars and the Magyars", 274-275.
[326] On Strategy, 23.

ment perceived the Magyars as a significant military factor in this part of Central Europe is indicated by the detailed description of their military capabilities and warfare tactics in the *Taktika* of Emperor Leon VI.[327]

In regard to the Magyars, the Byzantine diplomatic activity did not differ from the already established imperial policy in respect to the northern "Scythian" peoples who had not yet formed a stable socio-political institution i.e., a state, but their internal social structure was still in its initial stage, or rather it was based on a type of tribal union or a confederation of tribes. In that context, they were similar to other nomadic tribes.[328] The sources reporting on the Byzantine diplomatic measures in the Pontic steppe during late 9th century indicate that the success of the imperial embassies was based on two means of persuasion: bestowment of a considerable amount of gold and large quantities of various precious items to the tribal leaders. This is clearly and unequivocally reported by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos according to whom "...all the tribes from the north have, as it were implanted in them by nature, a ravening greed of money [and other gifts]".[329] This characteristic of the Magyars is also noted in the *Taktika*, the author of which reports that the Turks were "...possessed by an insatiable desire for riches".[330] This is also evidenced in the texts of Theophanes Continuatus and Leo Grammaticus. They say that Emperor Leon VI sent Niketas Skleros on a diplomatic mission to the Danube estuary to persuade the Magyars to wage war against the Bulgarians. For this purpose, he bestowed their chiefs Arpad and Kurszan with gifts. Having managed to arrange a military alliance, Skleros took hostages from them and returned to his emperor in Constantinople.[331]

The fact that the Magyars were not immune to valuables of any kind, and in fact tried to obtain them by various means, is indicated not only by their frequent raids, but also by their trading activities with the city of Cherson.[332] Accordingly, the amount and type of gifts bestowed by the Byzantine envoy Niketas Skleros, as well as the possibility of acquiring large quantity of loot from the possible pillaging of Bulgaria, were probably sufficient arguments for the leaders of the Magyars to agree to the proposal for a military alliance. This alliance was extremely useful for the Byzantine government, since from a defensive military position, it went to an offensive one. It allowed the opening of a second "northern" front at the mouth of the Danube River. Unaware of the Byzantine-Magyar alliance, the Bulgarian *knyaz* was taken completely by surprise. In the fighting that fol-

327 *Taktika*, XVIII.43-73.

328 According to *DAI*, 40.3-6, the Magyars were divided into seven clans whose leaders possessed equal political power. In the event of a military campaign, a chief elder was chosen from among them to lead the army.

329 *DAI*, 13.14-16.

330 *Taktika*, XVIII.45.

331 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 358.9-10.; *Leo Grammaticus*, 267.19-20.

332 Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 46-49.

lowed, this steppe people managed to convincingly defeat Simeon in three battles, who, besieged in the city of Dorostolon, asked for a truce from the Byzantine emperor. As a result of the Magyar military victory, but also of the subsequent devastation and plunder of Bulgaria by their hordes, the Byzantines were able to dictate the terms in the upcoming negotiations and, from a position of strength, demand certain concessions from the Bulgarian ruler.[333]

The alliance between the Magyars and the Byzantine Empire ended badly for the steppe people. After Simeon's plea for peace, the Byzantines ceased hostilities and withdrew their own military forces from the Thracian border and the Danube River. Freed from the Byzantine pressure, the Bulgarian *knyaz* called the Pechenegs who lived in the region between the rivers Don and Dnieper for help. They invaded the land of the Magyars from the east, right at the moment when their army was on a raiding campaign. Finding the country ravaged and completely devastated by the Pecheneg attack, the Magyars left for the Pannonian plain where they settled,[334] and together with other ethnic groups, which were apparently in the minority, started the process of forming of the Hungarian nation.[335]

After their migration to Pannonia, the sources indicate a change in the Byzantine foreign policy and problems in their mutual relations. In his *Taktika*, Leon VI writes about the Magyars that "...they are neither neighbors nor enemies to us at present, but instead they are eager to show themselves as subjects of the Romans".[336] Konstantinos VII, unlike him, gives a different picture. He reports on a certain diplomatic mission to the Magyars led by the priest Gabriel. Carried out, it seems, sometime during the first half of the 10th century, this Byzantine envoy conveyed to his hosts how, "...the emperor declares that you are to go and expel the Pechenegs from their place and settle yourselves there (for in former days you used to be settled there yourselves)".[337]

The conquest of the Pannonian plain by the Magyars led to a complete political change in the region. It can be seen from the sources that the Byzantine government tried to present this situation in its favour, in a way that was in full accordance with its political ideology and interests. To this end, it seems, that by claiming hegemony over Pannonia on a historical basis, the Byzantines probably decided to treat the Magyars as subjects who were politically and militarily inferior, but dependent on the Empire, or at

333 Taktika, XVIII.40.; *DAI*, 40.7-12. Also, Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 50.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 39.

334 *DAI*, 40.13-22. See also Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 52-53.; Bakay, "Hungary", 536-537; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 154.

335 Kosztolnyik, *Hungary*, 7-16.; Bakay, "Hungary", 537.

336 *Taktika*, XVIII.73.

337 *DAI*, 8.25-28.

least as a people that wholeheartedly wished to show themselves as such.[338] Emperor Leon VI's statement in his *Taktika*, as well as Porphyrogennetos' report on the imperial order to the Magyars during the first half of the 10th century carried out by the priest Gabriel as if they were Byzantine subjects, are evidence of this. However, the manner in which the leaders of this tribe responded to the Byzantine request, as well as their blunt and direct refusal to wage war against the Pechenegs, unequivocally indicates that the Magyars did not see themselves as subjects of the Byzantine Empire, but as an independent subject and an equal ally.[339] Additional evidence for this claim is the list of protocols in *The Book of Ceremonies* which notes that the Turks, i.e., the Magyars, received a two-solidi golden seal (chrysobull) and an imperial letter (γράμματα) from the Byzantine emperor.[340]

According to the sources, even in their new homeland the Byzantine government saw the Magyars as a people from whom they could ask for military help, if necessary, at least during the first two decades of the 10th century when they were under serious threat from the aggressive policy of the Bulgarian *knyaz* Simeon. Until Simeon's death in 927, through frequent diplomatic contacts, the Byzantines tried several times to acquire the Magyars as allies for a joint military operation against Bulgaria. The first such attempt is recorded in *De Administrando Imperio* during the negotiations with the Serbs in 917,[341] while the second is noted by the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos in his letter to Simeon where he points to the alleged military preparations against Bulgaria in which, in addition to others, the "Turks" (Magyars) were also involved.[342] Although the sources do not confirm of any Byzantine-Magyar alliance, they nevertheless indicate that certain diplomatic contacts were probably established between them. The reason for this perception of the Magyars by the Byzantine government and the importance that was given to them should be sought both in the deteriorating political situation in the Balkans, and in their location and military capability. Located in the Pannonian Plain north of the Dan-

338 It should be noted that the Magyars were also apparently aware, according to Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 52-53, that without maintaining friendly relations and formal recognition from the Byzantine emperor they could not acquire the political right to rule over the newly conquered country. Even the first anonymous Magyar sources indicate that they were well acquainted with the ideology according to which the territory surrounded by the Carpathians and the Alps was an integral part of the Byzantine political sphere. It seems that the reason why during the first few decades of the 9th century, the Magyars were inclined towards the Byzantine Empire should be sought here.

339 According to *DAI*, 8.29-33, on the Byzantine initiative, the Magyars unanimously declared that "...we are not putting ourselves on the track of the Pechenegs; for we cannot fight them, because their country is great and their people numerous and they are like devil's brats; and do not say this to us again; for we don't like it!"

340 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 691.

341 *DAI*, 32.89.

342 Nicholas, *Letter*s, 23.68.

ube River, with no other obstacle to the Bulgarian capital in case of war, with tactics of rapid nomadic cavalry warfare through surprise attacks, deception, ambushes and other various manoeuvres,[343] the Byzantine government could use the Magyars as a powerful military and diplomatic instrument against the Bulgarian aspirations for hegemony in the Balkans. Their convenient geographical location, along with the military skill they possessed, made the alliance with the Magyars an enormously important tool for the Byzantine emperor in his fight against this Balkans adversary. In fact, with the Magyar military aid on his side, the Byzantines were able to exercise not only political pressure and intimidation on Simeon, but, if necessary, use the same military tactics that had been successfully used against him in 894.

Unfortunately, starting from the fourth decade of the 10th century, the Byzantine-Magyar relations went in a completely different direction. Instead of providing military help, they began attacking the Byzantine Empire in their search for wealth and slaves. According to the sources, the first Magyar attack was carried out in 934 when their hordes entered Thrace and completely devastated its regions as far as Constantinople.[344] The next attack was few years later, in 943. In addition to these two attacks recorded in the chronicles, during this period the Magyars, apparently also undertook other smaller raids that were not recorded by the Byzantine writers. One such example is the raid on the *thema* Hellada which is attested in the Byzantine sources, probably carried out ca. 936.[345]

Militarily engaged on the eastern frontier against the Arabs, with Bulgaria as a buffer state against the attacks from beyond the Danube River, the first Magyar attack of 934 seems to have come as a great surprise to the Byzantine government.[346] Without adequate military forces across the Balkan provinces which could respond offensively to this threat,[347] the only option for the Byzantines was negotiation in order to calm the newly emerged situation. The diplomatic envoy, *patrikios* Theophanes, used the standard means which the Byzantine Empire had used in the past to prevent or avoid any military threat from the northern "Scythian" peoples who acquired their wealth by raiding and plundering. Acquainted with

343 *Taktika*, XVIII.46., XVIII.56.

344 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 422.20-423.7.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 220-221.; *Symeon Magister*, 746.1-5.; *Georgius Monachus*, 913.16-914.5.

345 About the Magyar attack of 943 see *Theophanes Continuatus*, 430.22-431.3.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 223; *Symeon Magister*, 748.1-4.; *Georgius Monachus*, 917.6-10. For other Magyar raiding campaigns see Panayotis T. Antonopoulos, "Byzantium, The Magyar Raids and Their Consequences", *Byzantinoslavica* 54 (1993): 257-258.; Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 56. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 155, assumes that this Magyar attack on Attica was carried out in 936.

346 Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 55, indicates that the Magyar attacks began after the military and political weakening of the Bulgarian state.

347 In 934 the city of Melitene was conquered by Ioannes Kourkouas. See in *Theophanes Continuatus*, 415.10-417.2.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 216-217.

their insatiable desire for gold, jewellery, cloths and other various valuables,[348] he offered the Magyars a considerable sum of gold to leave the imperial territory and release the prisoners.[349] As a result of the Magyars' admiration and praise on his insight and understanding of the situation, as well as on his tactical skill, it can be assumed that they accepted this generous proposal with a warm heart. Although a truce was concluded in 934, confirmed by the payment of a high tribute, the events that followed indicate that it allowed only for a temporary postponement of violence. The devastation and ravaging of the Byzantine territories continued, mostly by the Magyars who lived in the southern Danubian regions.[350]

In regard to the relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Magyar tribes, the sources for this period provide an indisputable fact that they were far from simple. The establishment of friendly relations with some of the Magyar tribes, while others continued their raids in the Empire, points to the assumption that by the 950s, there seems to have been some change in the internal relations among the clans. Although Porphyrogennetos reports that the Magyars had a supreme leader whose political role and importance was quite considerable when it came to conducting military campaigns, this independent military activity of the Magyar tribes indicates that there was an actual weakening of this single centre of power traditionally concentrated in the Arpad clan[351] and an emergence of several such centres that acted independently according to their own interests. This decentralization of political power and its transfer to several peripheral seats is also confirmed in *The Book of Ceremonies*, in which the protocol letter of the emperors Konstantinos and Romanos was not addressed to the *archon*, but to the *archons* of the Turks (Magyars).[352]

After the raiding of 943 the Byzantines became more aware that they could not stop the Magyars from penetrating and ravaging the territory of the Empire in their search for wealth through individual agreements and bribes. A military response was not possible due to the engagement of the majority of the Byzantine offensive armed forces on the eastern

[348] *Patrikios* and *protovestiarios* Theophanes was a widely appreciated and respected envoy, according to *Theophanes Continuatus*, 423.3-4.

[349] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 423.2-7.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 220-221. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 40, indicates that due to the nomadic way of life of the Magyars, for them the most valuable wealth during the first half of the 10th century were the movable things.

[350] Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 55, assumes that these attacks were, apparently, carried out by the tribes ruled by Gyula and Horka who settled along the Maros River and the counties Somogy and Zala. Mostly these tribes, along with others living in the southern regions of the future Hungarian kingdom, took part in these campaigns. According to him, there is no indication in the sources that Arpad's ruling clan participated in these ventures.

[351] *DAI*, 40.58. The *Taktika*, XVIII.44, reports that the Magyars had a monarchical social order when deciding whether to undertake a military campaign.

[352] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 691. The address was "To the *archons* of the Turks, two-solidi gold seal: Letters from Constantine and Romanos, the Christ-loving emperors to the *archons* of the Turks".

border,[353] so the only valid option which would improve the security situation of the Balkan Peninsula and lead to a possible long-term peace was negotiations. Thus, the emperor sent the *patrikios* and *parakoimomenos* Theophanes as a diplomatic envoy "...to them [in Pannonia], [who] made a peace treaty [with the Magyars] and took [from them] prominent hostages..."[354] who resided in Constantinople as an asset of diplomatic security, so that the Magyar leaders would respect and honour the agreement. Nevertheless, the negotiated peace was different from the previous one. It was not as the short-term truce concluded in 934, and only valid for certain Magyar tribes, but an official treaty.[355]

The Byzantines probably assumed that by signing this peace treaty, which apparently lasted for only five years, they would free the imperial provinces in the Balkans from the imminent Magyar threat.[356] However, in his *Synopsis Historion* Skylitzes notes that even after the ratification of the treaty the "...Turks [Magyars] did not discontinue their raiding and ravaging of the Roman land...", conducted by Bulcsu (Boulosoudes), leader of one of the Magyar clans, not until he "...came to the city of Constantine under pretence of embracing the Christian faith".[357] This independent action of Bulcsu confirms the fact that in the middle of the 10th century, the political power of the Arpad clan was probably on the decline in comparison to other Magyar leaders who held the titles of *Gylas* and *karchas*, which were right behind the supreme leader in terms of political importance.[358] Whatever the political situation among the Magyars, it should be emphasized that apart from the occasional raids by Bulcsu, the sources do not report of any significant Magyar raids until 959, when Theophanes Continuatus writes about a new Magyar attack that severely ravaged the Thracian regions as far as the gates of Constantinople.[359]

The reasons for the absence of information in the sources which informs about any significant Magyar campaign during this period could be several. One of these is the Magyar preoccupation with the West.[360] However, the events that followed the signing of the Byzantine-Magyar peace treaty in 943 point to the assumption that this, apparently,

353 Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 144-148, points out that during these offensive campaigns on the eastern border which were led by the military commander Ioannes Kourkouas, the Byzantines managed to annex significant territories that had until then been under the rule of local Arab rulers.

354 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 430.23-431.3.; *Symeon Magister*, 748.2-4.; *Georgius Monachus*, 917.7-10.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 223.

355 Dean A. Miller, "Byzantine Treaties and Treaty-making: 500-1025 AD", *Byzantinoslavica* 32 (1971): 57.

356 Antonopoulos, "Byzantium, The Magyar Raids", 260.; Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyar*s, 56.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 40.

357 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.

358 *DAI*, 40.47-52.

359 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 462.19-463.7. According to Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 55, 60-61, it was undertaken by the Botond clan.

360 Until the defeat at Lechfeld in 955, the Magyars carried out annual raids through the countries of Western Europe. For more detail see Bakay, "Hungary", 543-544.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 154.

was a result of the diplomatic measures of the Byzantine government. Five years after the signing of this treaty, Skylitzes reports about an official visit of Magyar dignitaries to Constantinople. These visitors were, in fact, prominent members of the highest strata of the Magyar society. One of them was Termatzous, the great-grandson of Arpad, and therefore a member of the Magyar ruling family, while the other representative was the *karchas* Bulcsu, third in importance among the Magyars, the man who, according to Skylitzes, had ravaged the Byzantine provinces in the Balkans in the past few years.[361] During his visit in Constantinople, Bulcsu was baptized, and his godfather was the emperor Konstantinos VII himself. Before returning to his own country, the emperor bestowed him with honours, many gifts and the title of *patrikios*. Arpad's great-grandson Termatzous probably also converted to Christianity, because the author of *De Administrando Imperio* states that he was a friend (φίλος) of the Byzantine emperor, a special title which, according to the aspect of ritualization in medieval diplomacy, was the third most important in the international diplomatic correspondence with foreign rulers.[362] Immediately afterwards, the second most important tribal leader among the Magyars, titled *gylas*, arrived in the Byzantine capital where he was also baptized and bestowed with the same honours.[363]

If we look at the composition of the Magyar delegation, the events that followed, as well as the results that were achieved, it can be rightly assumed that the Magyar visit to Constantinople in 948 was probably initiated by the Byzantines themselves and had some political background. The sources report that the peace treaty of 943 did not achieve the desired goal, as the Magyar aggression continued through Bulcsu's incursions. Militarily still engaged on the eastern border with the Arabs,[364] the Byzantines decided to take additional diplomatic measures that would allow the concluding of a peace treaty with the Magyars and a renewal of the military alliance, which would finally lead to cessation of their incursions in the Balkans and an establishment of peaceful relations. Realizing that there was no single political centre of power among the Magyars at the given moment, but rather a more complicated situation with which they were already familiar judging by the protocol letters sent by the imperial office, the Byzantine government apparently decided to establish strong ties with all political actors in the Magyar society who were equal to the Arpad clan in terms of military power instead with the most important of them.[365]

361 *DAI*, 40.63-65.

362 On Termatzous' naming as a *friend* of the Byzantine emperor in *DAI*, 40.63-64.

363 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.

364 In the following year 944, the Byzantine Empire successfully waged war against the Arabs from Edessa from where they took the *Mandylion*, the cloak with which the body of Jesus was covered.

365 That the Byzantine foreign policy was especially directed towards the Magyar border regions with Bulgaria ruled by the leaders *Gyla* and karchas is confirmed from the attention given to them in *DAI*, 40.67-68.

Unfortunately, all these diplomatic measures of the Byzantines proved to be short-lived. A few years after the baptism of the *gyla*s and the establishment of the bishopric of Turkey in Pannonia,[366] Theophanes Continuatus reports about renewed Magyar attacks on Byzantine territory. According to him, in 959 during Easter, a strong army entered Thrace and collected rich booty. Two years later, during the reign of Romanos II, the Magyars again invaded the Thracian territory.[367] The source material reports that until 968 they conducted raids and incursions on Byzantine territory which, apart from one or two, were apparently of no major political and military consequence.[368] These Magyar raids into the Balkans were probably frequent, because the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas used them as a means for redefining the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations.[369] But unlike before, when the Byzantines used diplomatic means, these incursions were now stopped militarily, whereas the defeat from the *patrikios* Argyros, *strategos* of the *thema* Macedonia and *Katepano of the Wes*t, stands out as which was extremely disastrous for the Magyars. This was possibly a consequence of two factors, the favourable situation on the eastern border as a result of the military weakening of the Arabs, and the strengthening of the Byzantine army, which reached the peak of its might at the end of the 10th and beginning of the 11th century.

Despite the defeats[370] the Magyars maintained their hostile attitude towards the Byzantine Empire until the end of the 10th century. Skylitzes lists them as allies of the prince Svyatoslav in his Balkan campaign of 969.[371] However, it is noticeable that they were no longer mentioned in the further course of this campaign and in the final battles that were waged under the walls of Dorostolon. Also, the additions of Michael of Deabolis' report that during the long struggle between Basileios II and Samuil for supremacy in the Balkans, Gavril Radomir was married to the daughter of the Kral of Hungary, whereas later he adds that, "...for reasons unknown to me he took to hating her and sent her away [to Hungary] when she was already pregnant to him".[372] In both cases, the Magyar withdrawal from the Rus campaign and deterioration of relations between Samuil and the king of Hungary can be assumed to have been a result of the Byzantine diplomatic

366 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.

367 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 480.13-17.

368 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 266, reports how during his visit to Constantinople in 968 a detachment of 300 Magyars captured about 500 people in the vicinity of Thessalonica.

369 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 265.

370 The settlement of a number of Magyars in the Balkans, probably ancestors of the often-mentioned Turks-Vardariots, also happened during this period. For more detail Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 59.; Iljovski, "Vizantisko-Ungarski sojuz", 84.

371 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 276, reports that Svyatoslav's allies, apart from the Bulgarians whom he conquered, were also the Pechenegs "...and the Turks settled to the West, in Pannonia".

372 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 332.

activity. This can also be seen in the alliance of the local Magyar leader Ajtony with the emperor Basileios II at the beginning of the 11th century.[373]

All this indicates that the past and present measures undertaken by the Byzantines were not in vain. The diplomatic embassies sent to Ajtony and later to Stephen I, the king of Hungary, together with the strong religious and cultural influence which probably existed among the Magyars during the late 10th and early 11th centuries, were beneficial to the Byzantine government's policy of reintegration of the Balkans. With the treaty signed with the second most powerful nobleman in Hungary, Ajtony, Emperor Basileios II bypassed Samuil and created a political counterweight to the alliance between him and Stephen I. Few years later, the Byzantine Empire managed not only to disrupt the good relations between Samuil and the king of Hungary, but with the help of these diplomatic measures, the Byzantine-Hungarian relations improved and an official alliance was concluded,[374] thus politically isolating the Kometopoulos completely. From a strategic point of view, this alliance was extremely beneficial for the Byzantine Empire. This alliance made possible not only to exert simultaneous military pressure on the core of Samuil's State from the north and southeast, but also to use the Byzantine tactics of attacking from two separate fronts, applied successfully in the past against the Bulgarian *knyaz* Simeon in 896. According to the Hungarian legends, this alliance resulted in the involvement of the king of Hungary in the Byzantine conflict with Samuil, which led to a joint military intervention in the Balkans directed against the unlocated city of Caesarea.[375]

The diplomatic activities conducted by the Byzantine government towards the Magyars, and afterwards towards the kingdom of Hungary, were aimed at neutralizing their raids on the imperial provinces in the Balkans, providing military assistance against other states, nations and tribes that threatened the Empire and, if possible, bringing this tribe, and additionally their state, into the Byzantine oecumene. Despite several failures, from the beginning of 11th century they finally achieved their intended goal. Not only did Stephen I, the king of Hungary, become an ally who militarily helped the Byzantine policy of reintegration of the Balkan Peninsula under the sceptre of the emperor in Constantinople, but during this process Hungary also fell under the influence of the Byzantine cultural sphere.

---

373 *FLHB* Tomus II, 373, 382-383.

374 According to Iljovski, "Vizantisko-ungarski sojuz", 94, it probably happened by 1009 at the latest after his victory over *gyla* Ajtony in 1008.

375 It is assumed that Caesarea was apparently either Ohrid or the city of Skopje. There are different dating's for King Stephen's participation in the Byzantine struggle against Samuil. For more details about this military campaign and about the assumption which city was conquered during this campaign in Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 62.; Iljovski, "Vizantisko-ungarski sojuz", 95-97.; Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil*, 34.; Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 118-119, n.145-146.; Boškoski, *Velikanite*, 111-112.; Antoljak, *Srednovekovna Makedonija* Tom I, 456-457.

Containment of the Pontic steppe threats: Pechenegs

"It is always greatly to the advantage of the emperor of the Romans to be minded to keep the peace with the nation of the Pechenegs and to conclude conventions and treaties of friendship with them and to send every year to them from our side a diplomatic agent with presents befitting and suitable to that nation"

Porphyrogennetos, *De Administrando Imperio*, 1.16-21

In the middle of the 9th century there was a change in the political constellation in the steppe region north of the Black Sea. The power of the Khazar state, on which the Byzantine Empire counted for military-political support in maintaining the security of the imperial dominions around the city of Cherson and the Regions (κλίματα) located on the Crimean Peninsula, as well as for preventing of other military threats originating from this region, found itself in gradual decline. During the next few decades, this allowed for an increased military and trade pressure from the Rus and a gradual rejection of the Khazar supremacy by some of the nomadic tribes. As previously, when they abandoned the Turks, accepting the Bulgars, and then rejected them, turning to the Khazars,[376] in search for a reliable and powerful ally in this region of Europe the Byzantines took diplomatic steps that were supposed to maintain the imperial influence in the Pontic steppe and to establish a new balance of power that would be politically beneficial to the emperor in Constantinople.

At the end of the 9th century, a new factor appeared on the political map in the Pontic steppe - the Pechenegs.[377] Like most tribes from the steppe, they were of Turco-Mongolian origin. Porphyrogennetos reports that the Pechenegs had a structure typical of other

[376] On the importance of the Khazars in the Byzantine imperial policy regarding the Pontic steppe see Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 172-177.

[377] For more information about the Pechenegs see Aleksander Paroń, *The Pechenegs: Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*, tr. Thomas Anessi (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

steppe peoples. They were divided into eight tribes, each led by its own great prince. Each tribe was further composed of about 40 districts governed by a district prince who had a lower rank than the great leader. Such a loose confederal division of tribes-clans allowed an establishment of a hierarchical order in the Pecheneg social structure itself, but also permitted the individual tribal leaders to act independently if it was in their interest. However, just as in the case of the Magyars, during a raid one of the chieftains probably assumed the role of a supreme military leader.[378]

This nomadic people who, according to Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, initially lived in the regions beyond the rivers Don and Volga were forcibly driven from their homes after a military defeat by the joint forces of the Khazars and the so-called Uzes. As a result of their expulsion, most of the Pechenegs left to the West. Migrating westward, they took full advantage of the declining military and political power of the Khazars in the Pontic steppe. At Simeon's request, they intervened in the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict and expelled the Magyars from their habitats around the Dniester and the Danube rivers, forcing this people to leave into the Pannonian plain across the Carpathian Mountains.[379]

The newly conquered home of the Pechenegs was of exceptional importance for the imperial government. It is noted from the source material that throughout history the Byzantine emperor tried to establish friendly relations and sign an alliance with all the tribes and nations who controlled this steppe region and could help militarily in strengthening the security of the Danube limes, the Balkan imperial domains and his capital on the Bosporus. Just as during the past few centuries, when the role of a Byzantine ally in this region was played by the Turks, the Bulgars, and then the Khazars,[380] thus, in the beginning of the 10th century this task was assigned to the Pechenegs settled on the northern shores of the Black Sea next to the Byzantine enemies in the Balkans and in the far North, but also to the very important trading outpost of the Crimea, the city of Cherson. Evidence of this is the statement of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, according to whom the Pechenegs performed various services "...for the emperor, in Russia and Khazaria and Zichia and all the parts beyond".[381]

The fact that this tribe was extremely significant for the Byzantine foreign policy is noted through its representation in *De Administrando Imperio*. Their origin and tribal structure, the states and peoples against whom they could wage war, as well as the military skill they possessed, are the author's focus of interest in nine chapters. Although

[378] For the tribal structure of the Pechenegs, see *DAI*, 37.15-33.
[379] *DAI*, 37.2-14.
[380] Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 178-179.
[381] *DAI*, 6.3-6.

without presenting more detailed information, the author gives a definite picture about the position of the land of the Pechenegs and of its strategic importance, apparently, was collected from various sources.[382] The information presented in this work indicates that the location of the Pechenegs was such that they could easily carry out raid and ravage the city of Cherson and the so-called Regions, to prevent the Rus from coming to "...this imperial city of the Romans, either for war or for trade...", the Turks (Magyars) to "...extract from the Romans large and inflated sums in money and goods as the price of peace..." or what is most important, to keep the Bulgarians in fear of a possible attack across the Danube River.[383] All this information, in fact, indicates that the Pechenegs ideally fitted into the Byzantine state-shaped strategy written in *On Strategy*, which can be referred to as "provoke and observe".[384] The importance that the Byzantines gave to the alliance with this Pontic steppe tribe during the middle of the 10th century can be seen from the conclusion given by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos in the first chapter of *De Administrando Imperio*, in a form of an advice to his son and successor, Romanos II. According to him, "...it is always greatly to the advantage of the emperor of the Romans to be minded to keep the peace with the nation of the Pechenegs and to conclude conventions and treaties of friendship with them and to send every year to them from our side diplomatic agent with presents befitting and suitable for that nation".[385]

The chapters dedicated to the Pechenegs in *De Administrando Imperio* represent a basic source that provides a picture of the Byzantine northern policy throughout the 10th century.[386] They are a testimony on the manner in which the Byzantine Empire adapted its diplomacy in the Northern regions, the principles of which, according to Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, in this period were based on maintaining good relations with the Pechenegs. He reports on the diplomatic means, methods, as well as on the principles of implementation, through which the Byzantines were not only able to win this tribe as

[382] *DAI*, prooimion.24-25, reports that all this information about neighbouring nations "...have I discovered [with the help] of my own wisdom". This statement indicates the difficulty that existed in gathering relevant information important for the foreign policy of the state. For more details about these problems in Jonathan Shepard, "Imperial Information and Ignorance: a discrepancy", *Byzantinoslavica* 56 (1995): 107-116.

[383] *DAI*, 1.25-28, 2.16-17, 4.5-7, 5.3-9.

[384] The author of On Strategy, 6.16-18, notes that in order to successfully defend themselves against the enemy, "...sometimes we can stir up neighbouring peoples against them".

[385] *DAI*, 1.16-20.

[386] Unlike most chapters that present old data irrelevant to the current situation in the neighbouring regions, the section devoted to the Pechenegs indicates that they were compiled from information which was likely collected during the years of diplomatic and commercial activity of the Byzantines among this tribe of the Pontic steppe, still valid in the period when *De Administrando Imperio* was compiled. On the manner in which the Byzantine government seem to have collected and selected the information related to the northern and steppe peoples see Shepard, "Imperial Information and Ignorance", 111-115.

their friend and ally, but also to maintain the concluded agreements and treaties. The reasons why the Pechenegs were important to the Byzantine Empire are also presented: the size of their population, the exceptional military skill which the imperial government apparently considered almost invincible, and the power to intimidate their opponents. All these aspects related to the character of this nomadic tribe are more or less highlighted in the chapters that refer to them.[387]

The diplomatic means used by the Byzantine government to persuade the Pechenegs to become their allies did not differ from the measures used on other peoples who had previously inhabited the Pontic steppe. In fact, they are common when it comes to nomadic tribes. The author of *De Administrando Imperio* reports how the Pechenegs were swayed by the Byzantine emperor through "...letters and gifts..."[388] and that they "...never perform any service without remuneration".[389] Their "greed" is explicitly stated in the chapters that inform about the sending of diplomatic envoys into the land of the Pechenegs. According to Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, they were extremely "...ravenous and keenly covetous of articles rare among them, are shameless in their demands for generous gifts, the hostages demanding this for themselves and that for their wives, and the escort something for their own trouble and some more for the wear and tear of their cattle". Then, when the imperial envoy entered their country, they first asked for the gifts from the emperor, "...and they ask for the presents for their wives and parents. Also, all who come with him to escort him back on his way back to Cherson demand payment from him for their trouble and the wear and tear of their cattle". What they demanded the most were "...pieces of purple cloth, ribbons, loosely woven cloths, gold brocade, pepper, scarlet or 'Parthian' leather and other commodities which they require..."[390], which not only had a material, but also ideological value.[391]

Although the Byzantines gave extremely great importance on contacts and maintaining friendly relations with this steppe people, which probably led to frequent protocol meetings on annual basis, the source material still indicates a certain gap between the efforts of the Byzantine government and the results that were achieved. In fact, the Pechenegs proved to be an extremely unreliable and fickle partner who not only did not adhere to the concluded

[387] About the military skill of the Pechenegs, see *DAI*, 4.7. What was the might of the Pechenegs to intimidate their opponents is best seen in *DAI*, 8.29-33.

[388] *DAI*, 4.10.

[389] Ibid, 6.11-12.

[390] Ibid, 6.8-9, 7.8-17.

[391] That certain objects also possessed an ideological value as well is indicated in *DAI*, 13.24-42. See also Jonathan Shepard, "Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples: Goods, Gods and Guidelines", in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 180-181.; Franziska E. Shlosser, "Weaving a Precious Web: The Use of Textiles in Diplomacy", *Byzantinoslavica* 63 (2005): 48-49.

agreements and treaties, but also broke them easily. During the campaign against Simeon in 917 they disobeyed the agreement for joint military action by refusing to cross the Danube River.[392] Despite that, only a few years later, the Pechenegs were used by the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos as a means for intimidating the Bulgarian emperor, which in turn indicates to a possible renewal of the military alliance with the Byzantine government.[393] The fact that during the first half of the 10th century this steppe tribe probably maintained friendly relations with Constantinople is in a way reported by the diplomatic protocol letter of the Byzantine emperors witnessed in *The Book of Ceremonies*, which was sent annually to the *archons* of the Pechenegs.[394] However, already in the middle of the 10th century, the sources report about an alliance between the Pechenegs and Igor, prince of the Rus, who just a year earlier launched an unsuccessful campaign on Byzantine territory. According to *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, the Bulgarians, as friends to the Byzantine emperor, informed him that "...the Russians were on their way, and that they had won the Pechenegs for their allies". The military threat was averted by paying a heavy ransom consisting of silk and much gold.[395] It can be assumed that Igor's first campaign against the Byzantine Empire, which ended ingloriously, was made possible after the prince of Rus managed to win the Pechenegs over to his side through bribery.[396] Two decades later they again allied themselves with the Rus against the Byzantines. In the campaign that followed, the Pechenegs were part of prince Svyatoslav's army that fought against the Byzantine military forces in Thrace.[397] Then, in the following battles, first under the walls of Preslav, and later at Dorostolon, this nomadic tribe is not witnessed as a Rus ally, which points to a possibility that there were some reasons why they were no longer part of the Rus army.[398] A few decades later, at the beginning of the 11th century, there was again an attempt to win over the Pechenegs against the Byzantines, this time by Krakras, one of the military commanders in the Samuil's State. But this attempt also remained unsuccessful.[399]

392 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 389.22-390.5.

393 Nicholas, *Letters*, 23.69.

394 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 691, "To the archons of the Patzinaks, a two-solidi gold seal: Letters (γράμματα) from Constantine and Romanos, the Christ-loving emperors of the Romans, to the archons of the Patzinaks".

395 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 72-73.

396 *DAI*, 2.16-18, points out that the Rus could not wage war against the Byzantine Empire, "...unless they are [previously] at peace with the Pechenegs".

397 In the battle at Arkadiopolis, the Rus together with their allies the Pechenegs and the Magyars were disastrously defeated by the magistros Bardas Skleros. For more details about the battle in Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 276-278.

398 Unlike the final battles under the walls of Dorostolon where the Rus had only infantry, in the battle at Arkadiopolis *Leo the Deacon*, 158, as well as Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 277, witness cavalry in the ranks of the Rus army, apparently provided by their steppe allies, the Magyars and Pechenegs. About the cavalry as a basic military unit among the Magyars, but also among all other nomadic tribes of the Pontic steppe, see *Taktika*, XVIII.49-57. That the Rus were not used to wage war on horseback is also reported by *Leo the Deacon*, 188.

399 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 337.

Although these events represent a clear confirmation of the Pechenegs' degree of fickleness, nevertheless, at the same time they testify to the success of Byzantine diplomacy among this people from the Pontic steppe. If the sources are analysed, it can be noted that in all cases where the Pechenegs allied with the Byzantine enemies or were in negotiations with them, they either suddenly withdrew from the alliance or the negotiations ended in failure. In 943, the Byzantines won their loyalty by paying them gold and silk clothes. After the defeat of prince Svyatoslav at Arkadioupolis during the Byzantine-Rus conflict of 969-971, the Pechenegs are no longer mentioned as his allies. Actually, the sources report that during the signing of the peace treaty between Svyatoslav and Ioannes I Tzimiskes near Dorostolon, this steppe people was in hostile relations with the Rus, and the plea of the prince of Rus to the Byzantine emperor to send an envoy to the Pechenegs to request a safe passage through their country clearly refers to the conclusion that they had apparently become a Byzantine ally in the meantime.[400] The same can be said about Krakras' attempt for an alliance with the Pechenegs. Skylitzes's narration of this event points to the possibility that his failure to win over this steppe tribe was in some way a result of the diplomatic measures taken by the Byzantine officials, probably, of the *strategos* in Dorostolon who had received this information from an agent.[401]

At an overall, the Byzantine diplomacy towards the Pechenegs can be characterized as successful. They were won over as allies of the Byzantine Empire with the only means that fully exploited the weaknesses of their nomadic character of living, which in turn was the result of the social order and the economic environment of this steppe people: purchase of loyalty through the bestowment of large quantities of gold and other valuables. These Byzantine diplomatic measures allowed the relations with the Pechenegs to be maintained on a friendly basis for most of the 10th century. The means that were used permitted not only to emphasise the political interests that the emperor had north of the Black Sea, but also to increase the security of both the imperial dominions in the Crimean Peninsula and in the Balkans, as well as of the Byzantine capital itself.

[400] According to Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 293, Svyatoslav requested from the emperor "... a delegation be sent to the Pechenegs inviting them too to become friends and allies; allies who would not cross the Danube to prey on the Bulgars but who would allow the Russians to pass through their lands unharmed on their way home". This passage actually presents the political situation that existed between the Rus and the Pechenegs noted in the second chapter of the *DAI*. The same is reported in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 89.

[401] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 337, reports that the attack by Krakras and Jovan Vladislav was cancelled because the Pechenegs did not send their military forces.

Between a friend and a foe: Kievan Rus

"What is this? What is this grievous and heavy blow and wrath? Why has this dreadful bolt on us out of the farthest north? ...[These] people has crept down from the north, as if it were attacking another Jerusalem... [and these] people is fierce and has no mercy; its voice is as the roaring Sea"

Photios, *Homilies*, III

The first contact between the Byzantine Empire and the people of the Rus, date back to the first half of the 9th century. They are mentioned in several sources of various origins. It is learned from the Frankish *Annales Bertiniani* that in 839 the Byzantine emperor Theophilos sent a group of foreigners named Rus to Louis the German with a request to help them return through his state to their own country, because the direct route to their homes was blocked by hostile barbarians.[402] Ibn Khurdadbeh notes in his compiled itinerary, that during the 9th century, traders from the north, known under the name *Rhos*, "...bring furs of beavers and of black foxes and swords from the most distant parts of the Saqaliba [land] to the sea of Rum, [where] the ruler of ar-Rum levies tithes on them".[403] The *Life* of St. George of Amastris also reports that during this period the barbarian people of Rus attacked the regions around the Propontis, as well

[402] See Gennadii G. Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus (IX – nachalo XII v.)* (Sankt-Peterburg: Aleteiia, 2000), 37-46.; Duczko, *Viking Rus*, 15-17.; Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, Mass./London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 153-154.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 181-182.; Jonathan Shepard, "Constantinople-gateway to the north: the Russians", in *Constantinople an its hinterland, Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*, ed. Cyril Mango and Gilbert Dagron (Aldershot: Variorum Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1995), 244. Also, Jonathan Shepard, "The Viking Rus and Byzantium", in *The Viking world*, ed. Stefan Brink (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 497.; Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 244.; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 445.

[403] *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum VI*, ed. and tr. Michael Jan de Groeje (E. J. Brill, 1889), 115-116. For the statement of Ibn Khurdadbeh about the Rhos see also Duczko, *Viking Rus*, 22-23.; Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 254.

as the city of Amastris on the Black Sea coast in Asia Minor, while Stephen of Sugdeia describes their incursion on the coastal region between Cherson and the Bosporan cities in Crimea.[404]

The change of policy by the Byzantine Empire and the growing interest for this people who lived north of the Pontic steppe corresponds with the attack they undertook on the suburbs of Constantinople in 860. According to the sources, a fleet of about two hundred Rus ships entered the Bosporus imperceptibly and besieged the Byzantine capital from the sea. With no warning of their arrival from Cherson, the Byzantines were taken completely by surprise. At that moment the imperial fleet was in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, while the army was on its way to the eastern border. All the suburbs, the shores of the Bosporus, as well as the Princes' Islands were completely devastated.[405] The magnitude of this marauding incursion of the Rus and the enormous fear that gripped the population of Constantinople are evidenced by the sermon with which the patriarch Photios addressed his fellow citizens in an attempt to encourage them: "Woe is me, that I see a fierce and savage tribe fearlessly poured around the city, ravaging the suburbs, destroying everything, ruining everything, fields, houses, herds, beasts of burden, women, children, old men, youths, thrusting their sword through everything, taking pity on nothing, sparing nothing...O city reigning over nearly the whole universe, what an uncaptained army, equipped in servile fashion, is sneering at thee as at a slave!".[406]

The Rus' attack on Constantinople in 860 which surprisingly ended as suddenly as it began, left mark not only among the population, but also among the officials of the Byzantine government. The Byzantines were aware that there was a strong possibility that the Rus military threat could be renewed. Since this enemy was located in the north, far beyond the known borders of the civilized *oecumene*, the prevention from future Rus attacks could not be achieved through the use of military force. Undertaking any campaign at the far north was out of the question, not only from a logistical, but also from ideological reasons, the origins of which can be dated back to the ancient period.[407] Second, the

[404] About Rus attacks on Amastris and the coasts of the Crimea see Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 24-36.; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 447-448.

[405] According to *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 60, the attack was led by Askold and Dir. *Theophanes Continuatus*, 196.10-15. For an analysis of the Rus attack see Alexander A. Vasiliev, *The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946). Also, Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, 51-53.; Duczko, *Viking Rus*, 83-86.

[406] For more details about this attack in *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, tr. Cyril Mango (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), III, IV.

[407] During its history, the Byzantine Empire undertook only one campaign north of the Danube, and that was during the time of Emperor Maurikios. This Byzantine offensive in the northern regions eventually led to an army mutiny and a violent dethronement of the Byzantine emperor. For the Christian and Hellenic origins of the Roman, and later Byzantine, perception of the regions north of the Danube see Michael Maas, "How

complete security of the Black Sea was also impossible to achieve. Patrolling its waters or at least the mouths of the Dnieper and Don rivers required large financial and human resources that the Byzantine Empire did not possess. The pacification of the Rus had to be accomplished by other means.

The measures that were taken against the Rus were in full harmony with the policy that the Byzantine government pursued in this period. In an attempt to impose Byzantine hegemony over this people from the north, the imperial government applied the same pattern which they used in the Balkans. They tried to Christianise them. Theophanes Continuatus notes that after this terrifying devastation of the Roman lands, envoys of the Rus ruling elite came to Constantinople where they asked to be baptized, "... which is what happened".[408] This event is confirmed by the patriarch Photios in his letter from 867 sent to the eastern patriarchs where he proudly declares that, "...and the so-called people of Rhos, about whom many repeatedly proclaim that in terms of ferocity and bloodthirstiness they surpassed all others, and who, after subduing all the surrounding peoples...raised their hands against the Roman government...And they exchanged their former pagan and godless belief for the pure Christian faith, ceased against us their former pillaging's and insolent attacks, voluntarily entering the ranks of our subjects and friends. And from such a strong desire and zeal for the faith, they became inflamed, so that accepted both a bishop and a pastor, and with great readiness and aspiration to love the Christian faith".[409]

However, these established religious and political ties were not as stable as Patriarch Photios wanted to portray them, and the religious mission that was sent among the Rus,[410] was apparently forcibly interrupted, without achieving lasting results.[411] Theophanes Continuatus reports that only a few years later Emperor Basileios I, probably in response to the pagan reaction in the land of the Rus, upon concluding a new peace treaty, ordered that a priest be sent to them again, but now in the rank of an archbishop, who, with the blessing of Patriarch Ignatios, was supposed to spread the Christian faith.[412] The events that followed show that despite the great efforts of the Byzantine government

the Steppes became Byzantine. Rome and the Eurasian Nomads in Historical Perspective", in *Empires and exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca.250-750*, ed. Nicola di Cosmo and Michael Mass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 26-33.

408 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 196.6-10.

409 *Photii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani epistulae et amphilochia Vol.1*, ed. Basileios Laourdas and Leendert G. Westerink (Leipzig: Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983), 50.

410 Vlasto, *The Entry of Slavs*, 244-245.

411 The Byzantine mission was probably interrupted due to internal disturbances which, although dated to 862, appear to have appeared in Kievan Rus' in the late 860s. For more detail see *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 60. Also, Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, 56-57.

412 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 343.1-343.11.

during the following decades, the Christianity failed to establish a firmer foundation among the people of the Rus.

According to the source material, the Byzantines tried to persuade the Rus to accept the Christian religion on every possible occasion. Thus, the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* reports that after signing the Byzantine-Rus treaty in 911 the churches in the Byzantine capital were shown to the Rus envoys where they were introduced to the Christian teachings, indicating to them that Christianity was the one true faith.[413] It seems that these methods of persuasion, along with the missionary activity which, although not attested in the sources, probably existed during the first half of the 10th century, bore fruit, for *The Russian Primary Chronicle* reports that at the time when Igor, the prince of Rus, signed a treaty with the Byzantine Empire, part of the population of the Kievan Rus' were already Christians. The catastrophic defeat suffered by the Rus in 941 in the Sea of Propontis where they, presumably associated the superior military power of the Greek fire with the power of the Christian God, probably influenced some of them to accept the Christian faith further more.[414] During the 10th century, the Byzantine government even managed to baptize the highest representative of the Rus ruling elite – regent Olga, the wife of prince Igor and mother of Svyatoslav. At the baptism, she took the name of the empress Elena, the wife of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, who in turn became her godmother. In fact, this diplomatic step was intended to symbolically mark the political relationship that was established between Olga, the regent of Svyatoslav, and the Byzantine emperor.[415] However, the baptism of one of the members of the Rus ruling family did not *de facto* mean an acceptance of Christianity by the entire population of the Kievan Rus or their descendants. Svyatoslav, Olga's son, held strongly to the pagan beliefs during his reign,[416] despite all the privileges, prestige and influence that came with the act of baptism.[417] This situation lasted until the time of Vladimir, when in the late 10th century, he and his elite finally rejected paganism, accepting Christianity as an of-

413 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 68-69.

414 Clear confirmation that Christian faith was already widespread among the population of Kievan Rus in the middle of the 10th century is provided by the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 77.

415 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 594-598.; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 82-83. For an analysis about the date of Olga's arrival in Constantinople and of her baptism see Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 154-214. Jeffrey Featherstone, "Ol'ga's Visit to Constantinople", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14, №¾ (1990): 293-312.; Georgije Ostrogorski, "Kievska kneginja Olga i Vizantija", in *Vizantija i Sloveni* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1970), 118-136.; According to Dimitry Obolensky, "Ol'ga's Conversion: The Evidence Reconsidered", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12/13 (1988/1989): 145-158, the baptism took place in 960 during Olga's second visit.

416 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 83.

417 About the ceremonial protocol and the privileges that Olga received see Ostrogorski, "Kievska kneginja Olga", 128-135.; Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*,168-174.

ficial state religion, as a condition for his marriage to the Byzantine princess Anna.[418]

But all these activities that were conducted in order to disseminate the Christian faith represented only one segment of the political and diplomatic measures which the Byzantines used in an attempt to win over and pacify the Rus. Although Theophanes Continuatus emphasizes the process of baptism, he, at the same time, also notes the means by which the Byzantine emperor probably succeeded in persuading the ruling elite of this northern state to make peace. According to him, through "...a rich distribution of gold, silver and silk garments, he [the emperor Basileios I] induced the irrepressible and godless people of the Rus to come to an agreement, concluding a peace treaty with them".[419]

The diplomatic measures taken against the Rus in the 860s prevented the opening of a new front in the Black Sea and at the same time made unnecessary the deployment of additional resources from the *themata* around Constantinople, required to maintain the security of the Byzantine capital and the surrounding provinces from future attacks from the Scythian north, allowing the same military forces to be used at the already existing military hotspots on the eastern border, in Southern Italy and the Adriatic Sea. That the Rus were not considered a significant military threat during this period, like the Arabs for example is indicated by the way in which Leon VI reports about their naval power in his *Τακτika*.[420] At the same time, it must be noted that this information represents evidence of intensified diplomatic and intelligence activity of the Byzantines throughout the regions north of the Black Sea during the last couple of decades of the 9th century. Specifically, they attest to the collection of military and other useful information about the Rus, a process that appears to have been carried out not only by the frontier military commanders, but also by the priests and other Byzantine officials sent on *ad hoc* missions to the land of the Rus, as well as through commercial and political contacts established by the ruling elite of Cherson.[421]

---

[418] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 111-119.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 319. See also Andrzej Poppe, "The Political Background to the Baptism of the Rus': Byzantine-Russian relations 986-989", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976): 207-208.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 192-195.; Sigfús Blöndal, T*he Varangians of Byzantium. An Aspect of Byzantine Military History*, tr., rev. and rewritten by Benedict S. Benedikt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 44.

[419] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 342.20-342.24.

[420] According to the *Taktika*, XIX.77, "...the Scythians [the Rus] use ships that are smaller, lighter and faster. Because they come into the Euxine Sea from rivers, they cannot use large vessels".

[421] The importance of the city of Cherson as a Byzantine trade and diplomatic outpost in the north is noted several times in the work of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Administrando Imperio*. For the manner by which the Byzantine government collected information about the surrounding nations and states, see Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 111.; Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 6-7.

However, despite all these intensified activities and established contacts with the ruling elite of the Rus, the sources report that during the first half of the 10th century the Byzantine Empire had suffered several military incursions from them, at least three of which were directed at Constantinople. The first, if the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* is to be believed, probably took place in 907. According to him, Oleg, prince of the Rus, landed in the Thracian region with a strong army and fleet and made a great devastation and pillage of the suburbs of Constantinople, destroying and killing everything in his path, thereby threatening the security of the Byzantine capital.[422] According to the report of *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, the hostilities soon stopped, and Prince Oleg returned to his country with rich loot. It was by negotiations that the Byzantines managed to stop the further pillaging of the Thracian region by the Rus.[423]

The manner in which these events which followed the cessation of fighting are presented, or rather the very course of negotiations and the detailed description of the oath that was given by both warring parties as a confirmation of the concluded truce, points to the fact that the author of this chronicle, obviously had access to official state documents, which indicates to the relevance of the data he presents in regard to the Byzantine-Russian peace treaty of 907.[424] According to him, after the initial Byzantine request for an armistice sent to the Rus prince through a diplomatic envoy, Oleg sent his representatives to Constantinople where the negotiations for a peace treaty began. The Byzantine emperor managed to stop the further Rus military incursions by satisfying the main need for which this people actually arrived in the Balkans, the acquisition of wealth. The Byzantine Empire used the same means

[422] About the Russian campaign of 907 see *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 64-65.; *Symeon Magister*, 706.12-707.10. On the reliability of the Russian chronicle see Georgije Ostrogorski, "Pohod kneza Olega na Carigrad", in *Vizantija i Sloveni* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1970), 96-117.; Romilly H. J. Jenkins, "The Supposed Russian Attack on Constantinople in 907: Evidence of Pseudo-Symeon", *Speculum* 24, no.3 (1949): 403-406.; Alexandar A. Vasiliev, "The Second Russian Attack on Constantinople", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 6 (1951): 165-224. In contrast Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 110, suggests that this campaign was probably a legend.

[423] According to *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 64, "...Oleg commanded his warriors to make wheels which they attached to the ships, and when the wind was favorable, they spread the sails and bore down upon the city from the open country. When the Greeks beheld this, they were afraid, and sending messengers to Oleg, they implored him not to destroy the city and offered to submit to such tribute as he should desire...The Greeks assented to these terms and prayed for peace lest Oleg should conquer the land of Greece".

[424] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 65, notes that after the agreed terms of the treaty emperors Leo and Alexander "...they kissed the cross, and invited Oleg and his men to swear an oath likewise. According to the religion of the Rus, the latter swore by their weapons and by their god Perun, as well as by Volos, the god of cattle, and thus confirmed the treaty". The procedure of ratification of this treaty is almost identical to that used in the Byzantine-Bulgarian treaty of 816 noted in *Theophanes Continuatus*, 31.8-21. About the ratification process see Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 72-75.

as in the time of Basileios I. In exchange for peace, they gave Oleg a large amount of gold, as well as silk, food and all kinds of other valuables.[425] In an identical way, thirty years later, in 943, the next attack of the Rus was prevented.[426]

But while this tribute, which was probably on an annual level,[427] managed to stop the current military danger, the rest of the diplomatic steps taken by the emperor, which were included as articles in the Byzantine-Rus treaty, were apparently aimed at restricting, for a prolonged period of time, the manner in which the Rus were obtaining profit and wealth through military means. The significant financial and commercial concessions to the Rus, as well as the months-long monetary allowance that, according to the treaty,[428] was assigned to their merchants if they traded any goods in the numerous markets of Constantinople, apparently, represented a kind of diplomatic measure through which the Byzantine government actually tried to prevent another grand scale raiding campaign.[429] The successfulness of this Byzantine policy of offering financial incentive through a payment of monetary allowance for trading, a solution which in fact in some way allowed the Rus to acquire wealth by peaceful means, is indicated not only by the signing of a new official treaty four years later,[430] but also by the decades-long period of peace that was established between the two states.

Basically, the treaty which was concluded in 911 had great significance for the Rus because its formalization simultaneously meant that their state was recognized by the Byzantine Empire as a subject in international relations. On the other hand, it allowed the Byzantine government not only to establish closer relations with the prince of the Rus, but also to start the process of incorporating this state into the hierarchical order of the Byzantine *oecumene*. The evidence that during the first decades of the 10th century Kievan Rus was already perceived as an integral part of the civilized world by the Byzantines, is the list of rulers found in *The Book of Ceremonies*, which reports on the states

425 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 64-65.

426 According to *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 73, the Byzantines told Igor "...to come no nearer, but rather to accept the tribute which Oleg had received, and to the amount of which something should even be added".

427 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 65, 73.

428 Ibid, 65.

429 Shepard, "Constantinople-gateway to the north", 257.

430 For more details about the Byzantine-Rus treaty of September 2, 911 in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 65-69. If one follows the Byzantine practice of concluding this type of agreement, which included a large number of clauses that thoroughly organized and regulated the relations between the states, it can be assumed that it was probably for a duration of thirty years, same as the Byzantine-Bulgarian treaty of 816 with which it shares number of similarities. For this Byzantine-Bulgarian treaty, see *Theophanes Continuatus*, 31.8-21. The period of peace itself, which lasted exactly three decades, when a new Russian attack on Constantinople is witnessed in the source material, further leads to the assumption that the Byzantine-Rus treaty of 911, was apparently signed with a validity of thirty years. See Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 96.

with which the Emperor maintained continuous diplomatic contacts.[431] The procedure of incorporating this northern state into the Byzantine cultural sphere was probably completed in Constantinople immediately after the official signing of the treaty, when the prince of Rus was apparently conferred with the title of *archon*,[432] which, among other things, was intended for the rulers of the pagan countries that were recognized by the Byzantine Empire.

The reason why the Byzantine government did not prevent the raiding of the Rus by military means, but through the use of diplomacy, should probably be sought in the complex situation in which the Byzantine Empire found itself at that exact moment, both internally and externally. In the east, the negotiations with the Arabs were at a critical stage, and after the defection of Andronikos Doukas in 907, the situation on the eastern border became even more complicated. Additionally, after the campaign which was conducted during 906 near the island of Cyprus, the Byzantine fleet led by Himerios was in the Mediterranean far from the Byzantine capital. At the same time, there was strong political instability in Constantinople after Leon's decision to enter into a fourth marriage and depose Nikolaos Mystikos from the patriarchal throne, who strongly opposed this step of the emperor.[433] All these events, it seems, influenced the final decision of the emperor to put an end to, with the help of diplomatic measures, the immediate military danger that threatened the Byzantine capital. Although these diplomatic measures did not succeed to completely eliminate the Rus military threat (several marauding incursions during the 10th century are sufficient evidence of this), it, nevertheless, prevented the immediate danger that loomed over Constantinople during these raids. At the same time, in an attempt to contain the threat, the Byzantine government started to use another method that could achieve the desired objective: the provoking of the enemy's neighbouring peoples against it. In relation to the Rus, this role was played by the Pechenegs.[434]

The catastrophic defeat of Igor, the prince of Rus, in 941 by the Byzantine naval and land military forces in the Bosporus and on the Bithynian coast, as well the successful prevention of his new campaign due to the timely notification from the city of Cherson and Bulgaria, which was made possible with the help of large bribes given to the Rus and their Pecheneg allies,[435] led to a change in the Byzantine-Rus rela-

431 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 690-691.
432 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 154-155.
433 Vasiliev, "The Second Russian Attack", 220-221.; Treadgold, *History of the Byzantine state*, 468.
434 *DAI*, 4.3-8.
435 *The Russian Primary Chronicl*e, 72-73.

tions. The new treaty that was signed in 944/5, in fact, shows how much the balance of power between the two states changed after this defeat.[436]

During the second half of the 10th century, the Byzantine Empire used the Rus military aid several times, which was made possible by the concluded treaties. The first time was during the reign of Svyatoslav in 968, and the second in 988-989 when Vladimir was on the throne. According to Leo the Deacon, the Byzantine emperor sent Kalokyros from Cherson as a diplomatic envoy "...to the Tauroscythians (who are called Rus in the popular language) to distribute to them the gold that he entrusted to him, a sum of 15 *kentenaria*, and lead them to Mysian territory to conquer it".[437] This Byzantine envoy, who was probably sent in 967, was supposed to develop friendly relations with the prince of Rus and persuade him to attack Bulgaria, which happened a year later.[438] Although this sum is rather high (15 *kentenaria* of gold) it is unlikely that it was intended only for Svyatoslav, because Leo the Deacon says that he was seduced "...with gifts and enticing him with tempting words (since all the Scythians are exceptionally greedy and particularly gluttonous, they are susceptible to the promising and taking of bribes), he persuaded him to muster a powerful army and march against the Mysians".[439]

In the source material, at first, we can notice that the prince of Rus was bestowed with gifts that were intended only for him. Second, he was asked to raise an army to fight the enemy instead of the Byzantine army. Therefore, it can be assumed that the sum in the amount of 15 *kentenaria* of gold that Kalokyros handed over to Svyatoslav, was intended only to cover his military expenses, although there is a high probability that about a third of it was personally for the prince of Rus.[440] Apparently, the Byzantine envoy Kalokyros actually had the task to remind Svyatoslav of the treaty of 944 and the obligations that it imposed, while the gold and gifts handed over to him were not only intended to facilitate the negotiations and indicate the seriousness of the Byzantine intentions, but they were also supposed to cover the costs of the upcoming military expedition.[441] The author of *The*

436 About the Byzantine-Russian treaty of 944 in *The Russian Primary Chronicl*e, 73-77.

437 *Leo the Deacon*, 111-113. In contrast, Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 265, does not go into detail.

438 Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 95.; Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, 145.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 48.; Treadgold, *History of the Byzantine state*, 502-503.

439 *Leo the Deacon*, 128.

440 About the salary of Rus mercenaries in the campaign of 911 see *The Book of Ceremonies*, 654. Also, Walter K. Hanak, "The Infamuos Svjatoslav: Master of Duplicity in War and Peace", in *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honour of George T. Dennis, S.J.*, ed. Timothy S. Miller, John Nesbitt (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995), 140, n.10.; Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 89.

441 I don't agree with the assumption that the Byzantine emperor gave consent for the Rus to confer the land that they will conquer, especially not a territory for which the imperial government repeatedly stated was an integral part of the Byzantine Empire, but was unjustly conquered by the Bulgarians in the past. Probably, that promise was given to Sviatoslav by Kalokyros when, according to *Leo the Deacon*, 128, he tried to take

Russian Primary Chronicle points out that the prince of Rus, when he agreed to attack the Bulgarians from the north, probably adhered to this military alliance. According to him, upon signing the treaty with the Byzantine Empire after his unsuccessful Balkan campaign, Svyatoslav made an almost identical promise as Igor: that not only would he not wage war against the emperor, but "...if any foe plans to attack your realm, I will resist him and wage war upon him. And even as I have given oath to the Greek Emperors in company with my boyars and all my subjects, so may we preserve this treaty inviolate".[442]

In contrast to the sources' inconsistency concerning the character of Byzantine-Rus relations before Svyatoslav's intervention in the Balkans in 968, they are quite clear and unequivocal in the reporting about the military aid that Vladimir sent to the Byzantine emperor in 988. According to the sources, it was in full agreement with the treaty of 944, which was renewed by Svyatoslav during 971. These report that Emperor Basileios II sent a diplomatic envoy to Kiev who "...had been able to enlist allies (ςίμμαχοι) among the Russians".[443] The aid that arrived was actually a military unit of about 6,000 soldiers.[444] However, same as in 967 it was not unconditional. If during the time of Svyatoslav the help was financially compensated, now as a result of the complexity of the situation in which the Byzantine emperor found himself, he was forced to make exceptional concessions.[445] Although reluctantly, and in stark contrast to the beliefs established by his grandfather Konstantinos VII,[446] he nevertheless agreed, apparently at the request of the prince of Rus, to make "...their leader, Vladimir, his kinsman by marrying him to his sister, Anna".[447]

The Rus unit of about 6,000 soldiers that arrived in Constantinople during 988, known in the sources as "Varangian", played a very important role in the Byzantine history starting from the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century. Not only did the emperor Basileios II saved his throne from the usurper Bardas Phokas, but this military unit became his personal guard, taking over this role from the *tagmata* of *exkubi-*

over the Byzantine throne.

442 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 89-90.

443 Skylitzes, Synopsis, 319.; Rozen, *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 23-24.

444 Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 94.; Blondal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 43.; Shepard, "The Viking Rus and Byzantium", 508.; Jenkins, *Byzantium: The imperial Centuries*, 308.

445 For Prince Vladimir's exploitation of the difficult political situation in the Byzantine Empire and the Byzantine-Russ relations in 986-989 see Poppe, "The Political Background", 195-244. Also, Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, 161-164.; Blondal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 43-44.

446 The author of *DAI*, 13.104-158, recommends that Byzantine princesses should not marry leaders of barbarian nations and tribes, unless they were Franks. See Poppe, "The Political Background", 218-219.

447 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 319. See also *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 112-113. More on the importance of the marriage between Vladimir and Princess Anna and its political implications in Georgije Ostrogorski, "Kijevski knez Vladimir i Vizantija", in *Vizantija i Sloveni* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1970), 137-146.

tores.[448] The Rus mercenaries constantly accompanied the Byzantine emperor, whenever and wherever he fought, whether it was on the eastern border, or in the Balkans against Samuil and this also continued with his successors.[449] Skylitzes provides indisputable evidence for the participation of these Rus mercenaries in the military operations on the Balkan Peninsula, indicating that in the beginning of the 11th century, the Varangian guard was most likely part of the army forces with the help of which the Byzantine emperor managed to conquer the Longos fortress in 1017 and raid the Pelagonian plain.[450]

According to the measures taken by the Rus princes, as well the benefits they received from the Byzantine government for their military assistance, it is difficult to perceive them as dependent rulers. The way they acted indicates that they were equal partners of the Byzantine Empire, and the military alliance that had previously been established was, in fact, an agreement concluded between two states where, from a political point of view, there was no subordinate party.[451] The reason why the princes of Rus respected the agreement with the Byzantines was, apparently, not only due to practical reasons, but also because of political and ideological reasons. For the Rus, a people whose main activity, if raids were excluded, was trade, Constantinople represented the largest commercial market where they could easily make good profit.[452] On the other hand, for the Rus princes, the maintaining of close ties with the Byzantine court and the emperor also meant increased prestige in international relations, a political reality with which the rulers in Kiev seem to have been very well acquainted.[453] This is noted in Vladimir's request for marriage with the porphyrogenite, "born in the purple" princess, Anna, the sister of the Emperor Basileios II, in exchange for military aid.

Despite the several obstacles that appeared during its activity, the Byzantine diplomacy towards the Rus can be formulated as an exceptional success. The political contacts established with the prince of Rus allowed the Rus – a potentially powerful adversary, to become a crucial friend of the Byzantines. Nevertheless, this transformation was not made overnight. The great distance between Kievan Rus and Constantinople was a factor

448 Blondal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 45.

449 Poppe, "The Political Background", 202-203, 211.

450 On the participation of the Rus in the Balkan campaigns of Basileios II see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 337. For the role of this unit at the end of the tenth century, see Blondal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 45-49.; Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 96-97.

451 Olga's refusal of the emperor's request to send him military aid is a sufficient example of this. See in *The Russian Primary Chronicl*e, 83.

452 For details about the Rus as soldiers-merchants and the importance of Constantinople see Shepard, "Constantinople-gateway to the north", 243-260.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 32.

453 That the northern peoples were aware of the advantages that came with the maintaining of closer political relations with the Byzantine Empire and possessing its state status symbols is indicated by the author of *DAI*, 13.24-33.

that basically weakened the assimilative power of the Byzantine culture. This allowed the princes of Rus to conduct a completely independent policy, at times extremely hostile to the Byzantine Empire. Nevertheless, such relations between the two countries were more of an exception than an everyday occurrence. The various means used by the Byzantine government during its diplomatic activity managed to win over the Rus' princes and to make them vital allies, whose military assistance was extremely important not only for the securing, but also for the maintaining of the imperial power during the second half of the tenth century. However, despite the fact that the Rus were *de facto* independent from a political point of view, its introduction into the *oecumene*, which exceeded the empire itself in territorial size, was an exceptional political success for the Byzantines.

STATECRAFT, FOREIGN POLICY AND STRATEGY

"The Constantinopolitan city, which formerly was called Byzantium and now New Rome, is located amidst very savage nations. Indeed, it has to its north the Hungarians, the Pizaceni, the Khazars, the Russians, whom we call Normans by another name, and the Bulgarians, all very close by; to the east lies Baghdad; between the east and the south [are] the inhabitants of Egypt and Babylonia"

Liudprand of Cremona, *Retribution*, I.11

Due to the influence of the Enlightenment and reinforced by the authority of authors like Montesquieu, Voltaire and Gibbon,[454] the medieval continuity of the Roman Empire was perceived negatively in society for a long time, and the name used (and is still in use) to denote this political entity was known to have extremely negative and derogatory meaning.[455] Today, although this negative connotation still exists, the term "Byzantine" is often used to describe something that is complex, specifically complicated and difficult to understand. At the same time one of the meanings of this word is to describe certain activities in the sphere of politics that were carried out through a complex and secretive way, such as intrigues, bribes and conspiracy, in order to gain political power or other benefit. This type of complex political activity aimed to achieve the various interests and goals of the Byzantine foreign policy through the use of methods, set of rules, norms and means, at present encompassed by the term diplomacy, was widely applied in relations with other states, nations and tribes, and it is its most recognizable feature. The statement that was given to the Byzantine envoy Valentinus by the ruler of the Western Turkic Khaganate in the second half of the 6th century, noted in the history of Menander the Guardsman, confirms the range of application of diplomacy, as well as its complexity in a very vivid way.[456]

[454] Agostino Pertusi, *Storiografia umanistica e mondo bisantino* (Palermo: Istituto Siciliano, 1967).

[455] Przemysław Marciniak and Dion C. Smythe, "Introduction", in *The Reception of Byzantium in European Culture since 1500*, ed. Przemysław Marciniak and Dion C. Smythe (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 1-5.

[456] *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. Roger C. Blockley (Liverpool: Francis Cairns LTD, 1985),

It is necessary to note that the term diplomacy as defined by scholars today e.g., as knowledge, skill and art of conducting official relations between sovereign political entities, is actually a discovery of the Renaissance. The word itself was coined by the Benedictine monk Dom Jean Mabillon in his work *De re diplomatica* from 1681 with which he wanted to describe the process of examining documents and international treaties, in order to determine their origin, meaning and authenticity.[457] Even the present-day practice of sending permanent diplomatic representatives i.e., ambassadors, to a foreign country is an invention of the Italian cities. The first such ambassador is noted in the sources during 1341 when the city of Mantua sent its permanent diplomatic agent to the court of the Holy Roman emperor Louis IV. Already during the 1390s, France had established permanent diplomatic contacts with the Italian cities of Milan, Florence and Naples.[458]

What scholars name Byzantine diplomacy represents, in essence, a natural continuity and evolution of the Roman foreign policy and its ancient heritage.[459] The basic foreign policy practices adhered by the Romans e.g., conferring of imperial honours i.e. citizenship,[460] and precious items as gifts[461] to foreign rulers and other important dignitaries, continued its use in the diplomacy of the Byzantine Empire,[462] as well as the bestowment of gold, an act which could be named as state "policy" during the reigns of Justinian I and Tiberius II.[463] In that context, the statement of Michael Psellos that "... two things in particular contribute to the hegemony of the Romans, namely, our sys-

19.1.50-62.

457 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 95.

458 Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), 61.; Jeremy Black, "Diplomatic history. A new appraisal", in *Routledge Handbook of Diplomacy and Statecraft*, ed. B.J.C. McKerneh (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 3-4.

459 Ekaterina Nechaeva, *Embassies-Negotiations-Gifts. System of East Roman Diplomacy in Late Antiquity* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 19.; Williamson Murray, "Thoughts on Grand Strategy", in *The Shaping of grand Strategy. Policy, diplomacy and war*, ed. Williamson Murray et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 28-30.

460 Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire. From the First Century CE to the Third. Revised and updated edition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University press, 2016), 33.

461 For the exchange of gifts during the reign of Augustus and Trajan see Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 139-140. *Eusebius' Life of Constantine*, tr. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 156, reports that when Constantine the Great received many gifts from the diplomatic envoys of the neighbouring and more distant countries he "...received these [gifts] from those who brought them and recorded them, and responded with equal gifts, so as to make the bearers very rich all at once".

462 For the policy of conferring aulic titles to the Germanic kingdoms of Western Europe during the 5th and 6th centuries, see Lampakis, *Byzantine diplomacy*, 40-44. For the steppe peoples see Maas, "How the Steppes became Byzantine", 24-25.

463 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, 35. On the bestowment of gold and other precious gifts as a Roman foreign policy in the late antique period see Roger C. Blockley, "Subsidies and Diplomacy: Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity", *Phoenix* 39.1 (1985): 62–74.

tem of honours and our wealth..."[464] is, in fact, evidence of a millennial continuity of the main aspect of Roman foreign policy. The policy that the Byzantine Empire used for pacification of the steppe peoples was identical with that of the Late Roman Empire. In international relations with other states, nations and tribes, the Hellenic ethnographic theory of influence of geographical zones i.e., climates, on the customs and appearance of the people who lived in those regions was used by the Roman state and it was also implemented in Byzantine diplomacy,[465] which can be observed in *De Administrando Imperio*,[466] as well as in a chapter of Maurikios' *Strategikon*[467] and the *Taktika* of Leon VI,[468] both of which are military manuals. Although the main focus of this chapter in these two military manuals is on the military skills of the various peoples that are target of study, nevertheless, between the lines of those chapters there are also information of an ethnographic nature that could be, and probably were, used in the imperial foreign policy.[469] Another characteristic of the ancient Roman cultural heritage was acquired and actively applied in the Byzantine diplomacy. It was rhetoric, the art of effective and persuasive speaking, the frequent use of which is clearly evidenced by the surviving correspondence,[470] as well as from the official reports on the course of the missions written in the Byzantine sources.

---

464 *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, VI.29.6-8.

465 Maas, "How the Steppes became Byzantine", 27.

466 According to Porphyrogennetos' statement given in DAI, prooimion.19-22, his son had to realize "...the difference between other nations, their origins and customs and manner of life, and the position and climate of the land they dwell in, its geographical description and measurements..." which, basically, is evidence for the application of the ethnographic theory in the Byzantine foreign policy and diplomacy. According to Anthony Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity. Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 88-93, the content of *De Administrando Imperio* is a blend of ethnological historical legends and myths with relevant current information about the character and mentality of the Empire's near and far away neighbours.

467 *Strategikon*, XI.

468 *Taktik*a, XVIII.

469 For example, *Strategiko*n, XI.2.12-20., notes that the Scythian nations "...have a monarchical form of government, and their rulers subject them to cruel punishments for their mistakes. Governed not by love but by fear, they steadfastly bear labors and hardships. They endure heat and cold, and the want of many necessities, since they are nomadic peoples. They are very superstitious, treacherous, foul, faithless, possessed by an insatiate desire for riches. They scorn their oath, do not observe agreements, and are not satisfied by gifts." In regard to Slavs, the author of *Strategikon*, XI.4.64-68., emphasise that "...they are completely faithless and have no regard for treaties, which they agree to more out of fear than by gifts. When a difference of opinion prevails among them, either they come to no agreement at all or when some of them do come to an agreement, the others quickly go against what was decided. They are always at odds with each other, and nobody is willing to yield to another." According to *Taktika*, XVIII.84, the Franks and Lombards at the end of the 9th century "...are easily corrupted by money, greedy as they are. This we have learned from experience, and we know from those who have frequently come here from Italy on some business or other."

470 Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 20.

It is an indisputable fact that the Byzantine Empire preferred to use diplomatic measures in its international relations rather than to fight on the battlefield with other states and "barbarians". This Byzantine attitude is observed in almost all sources and military manuals during its entire millennial existence, starting from the first decade of 7th century.[471] There were several key factors why the Byzantine government relied so heavily on diplomatic measures. The first one was the geographical location of the state, which formed and determined the measures and activity of the overall state policy, both foreign and domestic. The second were the limited resources, financial and human, that the Byzantine emperor had at his disposal, and which were essentially needed if the state was to be successfully defended against external aggression. The last factor was the location of the Byzantine capital itself, the city of Constantinople. All of these factors remained unchanged during the entire Byzantine history and they can be also noted in the period from the middle of the 9th and the beginning of 11th century as well.

The emperor in Constantinople did not have a simple task in maintaining the security of the state. The Byzantines were in a very disadvantageous position which is quite clearly noted by Liudprand of Cremona in the middle of the 10th century during his first diplomatic visit to Constantinople, where he enumerates all the states and tribes that had a strong military capacity to conquer the capital and destroy the Empire.[472] The Byzantine Empire was continuously surrounded by dangerous enemies and recurrently fighting simultaneously on two fronts, and after the migration and settlement of the Lombards in Italy - on three. With the rise of the Arabs during the middle of 7th century, the waters of the Mediterranean Sea became a battlefield as well. In such dangerous surroundings, encircled on all sides by potential enemies that could separately and without prior agreement, launch a simultaneous attack, the successful defence of the imperial provinces was almost impossible and the Byzantines were forced to take a defensive stance and choose the battles they would fight. The Byzantine awareness of this fact is indicated by the author of *On Strategy* who advises that when they were absolutely in no condition to continue fighting "...we then choose to make peace, even though it may cause us some disadvantage. When faced with two evils, the lesser is to be chosen. Negotiating for peace may be chosen before other means, since it might very well offer the best prospect for protecting our own interests".[473]

But even if there was some deployment of the Byzantine military forces on the field, it did not always mean a battle would be fought with the enemy. Frequently, this

[471] *Das Strategikon*, VII.8-12.
[472] *Liudprand of Cremon*a, 50.
[473] On Strategy, 6.26-29.

army deployment on the battlefield e.g., the display of military might, was perceived as some sort of an *ad hoc* diplomatic tool by the Byzantine government, the purpose of which was to distract enemies from their aggressive intentions, as indicated by the author of *On Strategy*, according to whom "...we [the Byzantines] might line up our own troops against them, not really for action, although this may often result, but to keep them at a distance from our own men. Feigned movements of this sort have often worked out well".[474]

The use of the ethnographic theory of the geographical zones in diplomacy, as a result of the existence of numerous enemies (with separate features created and shaped as a consequence of their way of life) on all Byzantine borders, is an indication that the imperial government established a specific foreign policy for each of those same enemies in accordance with the region from where they originated i.e., it made a distinction between the Pontic steppe, Caucasus, the Islamic world and Christian Europe.[475] It should also be pointed out that the Byzantines even knew how to make a distinction between micro-regions that were part of these larger areas, for instance Syria, Southern Italy or the Eastern Adriatic, and between states, nations and tribes that existed i.e., lived in those micro-regions.

The most powerful enemies that the Byzantine Empire faced on the battlefield throughout its history were dwelling in the lands beyond its eastern frontier. During the first couple of centuries after the new Roman capital, the city of Constantinople, was built on the shores of Bosporus, it was the Sasanian Empire, and from the middle of the 7th century this role of an ultimate political adversary was taken over by the Arabs who formed their own Caliphate primarily based in the city of Damascus and afterwards in Baghdad.[476] The Byzantine relations with this region differed significantly from those other regions of conflict because here, there was a neighbour who had a faith which was ideologically as powerful as the Christian religion. The permission of the Islam to wage

[474] Ibid, 6.17-20.

[475] Alexandar Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992), 3-4.; Jonathan Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay in Byzantine diplomacy", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 10 (1985): 234.

[476] For the Byzantine-Arab relations, see Hugh Kennedy, "Byzantine-Arab diplomacy in the Near East from the Islamic conquests to the mid eleventh century", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992), 117-143.; Dimitrios Letsios, "War and Diplomacy between Byzantium and the Arabs during the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus", in *International Congress on Graeco-Oriental and African studies and Colloquium East and West: Greek-Arabic relations*, ed. Vassilios Christides (Athens, 2017), 581-601.; Koray Durak, "Diplomacy as performance: Power Politics and Resistance between the Byzantine and the Early Medieval Islamic Courts", in *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, Istanbul, 21-23 June 2010*, ed. Ayla Ödekan; Nevra Necipoğlu et al. (Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2013), 157-164.

"Holy War" or *Jihad*, made the Arabs not only religiously, but also politically as powerful as the Byzantine Empire, and militarily even superior. In addition, after conquering the Byzantine provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa, and completely destroying the Sasanian Empire, the Arabs became vastly superior to the Byzantines in wealth, science, literature and culture. The author of the *Anonymous Book of Tactics* reports that "...the land of the Agarenes, [is] so productive and abounding in so many crops".[477] This political, as well as military and economic might that the Arabs possessed made them less enchanted by, and almost impossible to fall under the influence of the Byzantine display of splendour in order to achieve some diplomatic end. Therefore, the Islamic world, like the Sasanians before,[478] was treated on an equal footing (at one point the Caliph was even named brother of the Byzantine emperor),[479] and during the 10th century the imperial subjects who held the title of *magistros* were sent as diplomatic envoys - persons who, in fact, belonged to the highest circle of the Byzantine government and usually had extremely close ties with the ruling dynasty.[480] The war with the Arabs could not be avoided, but it always ended with a truce, which however, did not last long.[481] In fact, the reasons why the Byzantine emperors were much more eager to take offensive action against the Islamic Arab states rather than the Christian states in Western Europe or the Balkan Peninsula, were the overall ideological benefits that could be obtained.[482] This is also confirmed by Michael Psellos when he notes about the ambitions of Romanos III Argyros to gain military victories in the East.[483]

Western Europe presented a completely different challenge to the Byzantine rule. The nations and states of this region not only shared a common Roman historical and

477 *Campaign Organisation and Tactics*, 21.26-28.

478 For the relations with the Sasanians, see Miller, *Studies*, 145-147.

479 About the Byzantine diplomatic protocol with the Islamic world see *The Book of Ceremonies*, 686, 689. In regard to the naming of the Caliph as a spiritual brother of the emperor and a brief overview of Byzantine-Arab relations see Miller, *Studies*, 148-149. For a general overview of Byzantine and Christian diplomatic relations with the Arabs see Nicolas Drocourt, "Christian-Muslim relations. An overview of the main sources and themes of encounter (600-1000)", in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History. Vol.2 (900-1050)*, ed. David Thomas and Alexander Mallet (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 29-72.

480 Alexander Beihammer, "Strategies of Diplomacy and Ambassadors in Byzantine-Muslim Relations on the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries", in *Ambassadeurs et ambassades: au coeur des relation diplomatiques: Rome-Occident médiéval-Byzance: VIIIe s. avant J.-C.-XIIe s. après J.-C.*, ed. Audrey Becker and Nicolas Drocourt (Metz: Universite de Lorraine, 2012), 375.

481 For this statement see Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 6.19-24.

482 John F. Haldon, "Blood and Ink: Some observations on byzantine attitudes towards warfare and diplomacy", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992), 289-290.; Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 234-235.

483 *Michaelis Pselli*, III.7-8.

cultural heritage with the Byzantines, but they were also Christians who fell under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the pope of Rome, with whom the Byzantine emperor maintained, for the most part, good and cordial relations.[484] Furthermore, Western European states were established on a territory that had once been part of the *Orbis Romanus* and was considered as *pars occidentalis* of its empire by the Byzantine government, temporarily separated from their authority as a result of unfortunate circumstances, making this region an integral part of the Byzantine sphere of interest.[485] The only political power in this part of Europe that could challenge the Byzantine interests, besides the Roman papacy, was the Western Empire, restored first during the early 9th century by Charlemagne and then re-established in the middle of the 10th century by Otto I, the ruler of the Eastern Frankish kingdom, and for the most part the conflict was over the region of Southern Italy and the imperial prerogatives in Christendom.[486] However, on the grounds of its longevity and political continuity the beginnings of which, according to the perception of the Byzantine government, should be sought in the ancient Roman state, the Byzantine Empire, unlike the Western European states, could present itself as a more complex and cohesive political system which represented a significant advantage in their mutual diplomatic relations. Therefore, the Byzantine political interests and ends, and the way to accomplished these in Western Europe, differed from those in the East. They were frequently achieved by using diplomatic means, although the political interests of the two Christian empires sometimes led to armed conflicts, which were of a minor character and related to the control of the petty Lombard duchies in Southern Italy.[487]

484 Lampakis, *Byzantine diplomacy,* 85-140.

485 Regarding the relations with Western Europe see Donald M. Nicol, "The Byzantine View of Western Europe", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 8, no.4 (1967): 315-339.; Karl Leyser, "The Tenth Century in Byzantine-Western Relationship", in *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages*, ed. Derek Baker (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), 29-63.; Judith Herrin, "Constantinople, Rome and the Franks in the seventh and eight centuries", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992), 91-107.; Jonathan Shepard, "Aspects of Byzantine attitudes and policy towards the west in the tenth and eleventh centuries", in *Byzantium and the West c.850-c.1200, Proceedings of the XVIII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. James H. Howard-Johnston (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), 67-117.

486 About the relations of the Byzantine Empire with the states of Western Europe in regards to the *zweikeiserproblem*, see Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Byzantium and the West – the West and Byzantium (Ninth-Twelfth Centuries). Focusing on Zweikeizerproblem. An Outline of Ideas and Practices", in *Aureus: Volume dedicated to professor Evangelos Chrysos*, ed. Tachiarchis G. Kolias et al. (Athens: National Research Foundation/ Institute of Historical Research, 2014), 357-371.; Lampsakis et al., *Byzantine diplomacy*, 42.; Nicol, "The Byzantine View", 320-321.; Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris: Presses Universities de France, 1975), 17.; George Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order", *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35, no.84 (1956): 7.

487 About Southern Italy and the Byzantine policy towards this region see Barbara M. Kreutz, *Before the Normans. Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).;

The conditions in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe differed significantly from those in the east or the west, where one significant centre of political and religious power always existed. As a result of the geographical connection of these two geographical regions at the mouth of the Danube River, the Byzantine Empire had a multitude of nations and tribes with whom it had to reckon north of the Black Sea, and who knew how to become potential enemies. Some of the nations and tribes that lived in these regions, like the Slavs or Bulgars for example, managed to settle on Byzantine territory in the past in their search for wealth and more secure life. Others like the Rus, Pechenegs and Magyars, who lived beyond the northern frontier of the Byzantine Empire during the 9th and 10th centuries, posed a serious threat to the security of the Balkan provinces, as well as to the city of Constantinople. But even in this region, the Byzantines had their own political and military ends. The Balkans along with the Danube River represented the northern border of the state, the ancient *limes Romanus*, which had its own specific geopolitics. Until the end of the 6th century, the Danube frontier was, in fact, an area where some of the soldiers were sent to be properly punished if they did not perform their tasks efficiently.[488] Although there were two natural barriers, the Black Sea and the Danube River, these did not prove to be an insurmountable obstacle for the security of the Byzantine capital and the imperial provinces, the majority of which had already been lost by the end of the 7th century. In contrast to the Balkans, where the main threat for the Byzantine interests and goals was Bulgaria (the Sklaviniai and the South Slavic principalities were too small, disunited and militarily inferior), from the middle of the 9th century the Byzantine government began to face several extremely aggressive and warlike nomadic tribes and a new state in the Black Sea region. The military means that were used until the end of the 7th century in an attempt to calm the situation in this region proved to be ineffective, as a result of the fact that in the moment when an opponent was defeated on the battlefield, the geographical factors allowed for one or more new aggressive and warlike enemies to appear in the background.

In relations with the states, nations and tribes from the Balkans and the Pontic steppe region, the Byzantine Empire had significant advantage. Its level of civilisational and economic development, as well as the highly sophisticated and complex state bu-

Federico Marazzi, "Byzantines and Lombards", in *A Companion to Byzantine Italy*, ed. Salvatore Consentino (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 169-194.; Vera von Falkenhausen, "Between two empires: Byzantine Italy in the reign of Basil II", in *Byzantium in the year 1000*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), 135-151.; Graham A. Loud, "Byzantium and South Italy (876-1000)", in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500-1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 560-582.; Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 177-202.

488 See Walter E. Kaegi Jr., *Byzantine Military Unrest (471-843). An Interpretation* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert Publisher, 1981), 111-113.

reaucracy for the time being, although by today's standards it would be enormously inefficient, far exceeded the social systems and institutions created by these same states, nations and tribes in terms of the wealth it could collect and distribute. The antique origins of the state itself and its ability to survive despite all dangers also had a strong influence on the foreigners. All these factors, as well as the admiration and awe of all these nations and tribes about the magnitude of the Byzantine wealth (divitiae) and wisdom (sapientia),[489] allowed the Byzantine government to use various diplomatic means against them in accomplishing the political interests and ends it had in this region.

[489] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 50.

Statecraft

"Aim of the emperor is to guard and secure through his virtue the things which he already possesses; to recover and maintain through sleepless care the things lost; and to acquire, by wisdom and through just victories, the things absent"

Photios, *Epanagog*e, II.2

The Roman state dates its beginnings several centuries before the beginning of the Common Era. At first established as a kingdom, then led by consuls, in 27 B.C. this state, which encompassed territories from Britain in the north and the Iberian Peninsula in the west, to Mesopotamia in the east and from the Danube River to the Sahara Desert in the south, was shaped into an empire ruled by a sovereign who bore the title of *Augustus*. With the building of a new Roman capital on the Bosporus in 330 A.D., named after its founder, the Roman emperor Constantine the Great, a new epoch began. This reshaped Roman Empire, known today as the Byzantine Empire, which had as its political centre this new city and not the old Rome, survived in the turbulent period of the European civilization for more than a millennium.

The overall consensus in the Byzantine studies is that the main reason why the Byzantine Empire managed to maintain and survive on the political scene for so long, should be sought in its state structures, which had their early development from the time of the first Roman emperor, Octavian Augustus. On one hand, the scholars emphasised the imperial army, its military power, the sophisticated equipment and its tactical efficiency on the battlefield, as well as the military-administrative system of *strategides* and later of *themata*, as major factors for the Byzantine longevity,[490] while on the other, they pointed to the imperial bureaucracy in the context of the economy, that successfully managed not only the administrative and financial aspects of the state, but also the

[490] On the importance of the army see Yannis Stouraitis, "Introduction: Military Power in the Christian Roman Empire, ca. 300-1204", in *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300-1204*, ed. Yannis Stouraitis (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 1-16. For the thematic system, see Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c.650-850: a History (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 723-771.

numerous reforms that it carried out, all of which had a purpose of allowing the emperor and his closest associates to use the state resources as efficiently as needed to maintain the might and security of the empire.[491] Furthermore, it is repeatedly stated that diplomacy also played a significant role in the longevity of the Byzantine Empire and was an irrefutable element which explained how and why this state survived for an entire millennium.[492] However, the establishment and existence of institutions in a state does not *a priori* mean that it will be long-lasting. In fact, that is possible only through the individuals who are part of these state institutions, namely the high-ranking officials, military commanders in the army, but mainly leaders of the polities in whom the supreme power of the political decision-making was concentrated, and who, it seems, acquired certain level of knowledge and set of skills (ideas, plans, methods, techniques, strategies, tactics, etc.) that allowed them to successfully govern the state and conduct its various affairs - an art today known under the term *statecraft*.

In this context, regarding the possession of certain level of knowledge and set of skills in order for the emperor and his closest associates to be able to govern the state successfully, the Byzantine sources put forth numerous testimonials. According to Theophanes Continuatus, during his reign Emperor Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos "... immediately his judgement determined what needed to be done about matters in the east and what about matters in the west. He went over these letters as if he had wings, receiving embassies, sending instructions to officials, rectifying changes which had been made in haste".[493] Michael Psellos in relation to Isaakios I Komnenos (1057-1059) and his art of governing declares that "...from the very beginning he personally supervised state affairs...[and] he preferred to be ignorant of nothing, even to the smallest details, but because [he] knew that this was impossible, he would have tried to obtain his information by indirect means. He used to send for a wise man and, without questioning him on the subject about which he was ignorant, by clever manoeuvring round it, he would make the other reveal what he himself did not know, in such a way that the expert was appar-

[491] On the role of the financial system in On Strategy, 2.18-21. See also Angeliki E. Laiou, "Writing the Economic History of Byzantium", in *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 4-5.; Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 8-9.; John F. Haldon, "Bureaucracies, elites and clans: the case of Byzantium ca 500–1100", in *Empires and bureaucracy in world history: from late Antiquity to the twentieth century*, ed. Peter Crooks and Timothy H. Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 147–169.

[492] Nicolas Drocourt, "Ambassadors as Informants and Cultural Brokers between Byzantium and the West (8th to 12th Centuries)", in *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge. Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen 2: Menschen und Worte*, hrsg. Falko Daim et al. (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2018), 81.

[493] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 448.20-449.1.

ently explaining something that was common knowledge to both of them alike".[494] Some Byzantine rulers, for one reason or another, allowed their closest associates to conduct the affairs of the state in their name. Thus, Theophanes Confessor reports that when Empress Eirene was on the throne, Staurakios, "...the patrikios and logothetes of the Course... was at the head of everything and administered all [public] matters."[495] The author of the *Life* of Euthymios points out that during the reign of Leon VI, Stylianos Zaoutzes was in charge of the Empire i.e., all things - political, military and ecclesiastical, were left to him, as well as the full control and responsibility for all decisions that the government had to make. The *Life* of Theophano presents the same picture regarding the importance of Stylianos Zaoutzes.[496]

There is no absolute definition of what the term *statecraft* encompasses among scholars today. It usually defines only the art of practical management of international relations, the focus of which is on the tools and their implementation,[497] despite the fact that this term can encompass all activities (both foreign and domestic policies) that contribute to the successful and efficient administration of the state.[498] Hence, although in its essence it represents politics, nevertheless, statecraft is much more than that. Both terms deal with an intention, more precisely, the realization or completion of some work i.e., with the achievement of a certain objective. However, while politics focuses on what represents an approximate goal, statecraft is focused on the ultimate or penultimate ends i.e., on what is important in the long term in relation to the state's well-being. In fact, this is what should rightfully be, and is, considered high politics today: the sphere of domestic and international priorities of a state, its military and political interests and ends, as well as the means that are necessarily needed for their successful implementation in praxis. Both aspects of the political activities are subject to scientific research. However, unlike the political theory, as well as the

494 *Michaelis Pselli*, VII.44.2-3, 64.1-6.

495 *Theophanes*, 629.

496 *Tougher, Reign of Leo VI*, 92-93.

497 Rebecca Freedman Lissner, "What is Grand Strategy? Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield", *Texas National Security Review* 2/1 (2018): 57.; David A. Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft. New Edition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 6-7.; Jönsson, "Theorising diplomacy", 15. From that scientific aspect, several subcategories are distinguished, such as economic, military, diplomatic or religious statecraft which are studied as a tool of a state's foreign policy, as is indicated by Nina Silove, "Beyond the Byzzword: The Three Meanings of 'Grand Strategy'", *Security Studies* 27, no.1 (2018): 31-32, 46, 49, 50, 54, and according to whom they had a significant influence in the shaping of the grand strategy. An example of religious statecraft is presented in the paper of Rugare Rukuni, "Religious statecraft: Narratives of persecution and diplomacy in the case of Byzantine, Aksum and Himyar", *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no.4 (2021): 1-13, which refers to the early Byzantine period.

498 Alison R. Holmes and J. Simon Rofe, *Global Diplomacy. Theories, Types and Models* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2016), 2.; Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft*, 6.

formal theory applied in researching the fundamental bases of the political relations that appear in human society today, the *theory of statecraft*, in fact, represents a type of political thought that refers to the study of the art of successful governance of a state, and for this purpose, it analyses the political testaments, as well the historical texts known today under the general name "mirror for princes".[499] More precisely, if the political theory researches the current principles, laws, movements and interactions in a society or a state, then the theory of statecraft studies the art of leadership, the basic issues important for conducting a state policy, both domestic and foreign, but also the problems related to the political and military strategy, or, to put in simple terms, with one comprehensive strategy (which appears as its outcome), known today under the term *grand strategy* and its implementation.[500]

In general, statecraft does not represent an ordinary set of formal rules that relates to governing a state, but rather it is a political art, a craft, in which through rational and intuitive decision-making, application of various ideas, plans, strategies, tactics and means that are characteristic for it, the political interests and ends that the government had set before itself are achieved, regardless of whether they refer to the domestic or foreign policy. This art, along with its system of implementation named today with the term grand strategy, must constantly adapt to the ever-changing conditions and circumstances in the world and modify to the current situation in order to be able to better resolve the problems that would arise during numerous foreign policy activities. Due to the extremely variable nature of the act of governing and its aspects, one of which is the idiosyncratic behaviour of the ruler, as well as the various unpredictable factors that could arise over the years, decades or centuries, it is highly unlikely that the art of statecraft and its grand strategy could be presented as some form of continuous endeavour or be transmitted in some written form, for example in the form of a plan, an arrangement that is more characteristic of modern states due to the fact that these are considerably more sophisticated political entities than their medieval counterparts.[501] In that context, the closest written form of the medieval statecraft and state governing are the texts known as "mirror for princes", while it's practical application and the ensuing results must be sought among the chapters of other sources from this period.

[499] John E. Tashjean, "On Theory of Statecraft", *The Review of Politics* 35, no.3 (1975): 375.

[500] Silove, "Beyond the Byzzword", 31-32.; Morton A. Kaplan, "An Introduction to the Strategy of Statecraft", *World Politics* 4 no.4 (1952): 548.; Tashjean, "On Theory", 382.

[501] Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, "Introduction: On strategy", in *The Making of a strategy. Rulers, States and War*, ed. Williamson Murray et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1-2.; Murray, "Thoughts", 2-5.; Lissner, "What is Grand Strategy?", 64-67. For the process of creating a written form plan for National Strategy in the modern states, see Silove, "Beyond the Byzzword", 33-38.

The manuscripts within the group of texts named "mirror for princes" are written in a form that allows direct and overall lessons and advice to emperors, kings and other independent rulers related to certain aspects of governance and political behaviour. These works were usually composed at a time when a young and inexperienced ruler was about to ascend the throne - written by respected thinkers in his state, by advisers close to the previous ruler or by his father. It is assumed that the theory of statecraft began to spread throughout Europe since the time of Isocrates, who authored an instructive and stimulating didactic work entitled "To Nicocles",[502] a text that contains the basic most attributes in order to enter the literary genre of "mirror for princes". However, it should be noted that works covering this theme can be observed since the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia, where the king was named as a shepherd of his people. Through these instructive works, the theory of statecraft can also be seen in the regions of India during the 2nd millennium B.C., in the far east in China, during the time of Confucius,[503] as well as in Persia and later in the Islamic world.[504]

Although the theory of statecraft undoubtedly appears and persists in all literary civilizations that have existed throughout history, nevertheless, the European branch is one of the most extensive, because it contains the largest number of works that belong to the genre "mirror for princes", starting from the ancient Hellenic and Roman periods and throughout the medieval period, which can be divided into several branches according to the authors and its regional origin: early medieval, Carolingian, Irish, general West European, as well as Byzantine, ending with the emergence of Renaissance. The tradition of writing texts of this kind died out immediately after the outbreak of the French Revolution at the end of 18th century, as a result of the dispersion of political power that took place throughout the European states and the gradual disappearance of the monarchies in the form as they existed during the Middle Ages.[505] Nevertheless, the study of the art of conducting state affairs i.e., of statecraft, continues even today through the application of modern and highly scientific forms and methods of research.

[502] Isocrates, *To Demonicus. To Nicocles. Nicocles or the Cyprians. Panegyricus. To Philip. Archidamus*, tr. George Norlin (London: William Heinemann LTD, 1928), 38-71.

[503] Raymond Cohen, "Reflections on the New Global Diplomacy: Statecraft 2500BC to 2000AD", in *Innovation in diplomatic practice*, ed. Jan Melissen (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999), 3-11.; Tashjean, "On Theory", 378-381.

[504] *Mirror for the Muslim Prince. Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*, ed. Mehrzad Boroujerdi (Siracuse: Siracuse University Press, 2013). See also Linda T. Darling, "Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability", in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 223-242.

[505] Tashjean, "On Theory", 382-384.

Byzantine diplomacy in the "Mirror for Princes"

There is a considerable number of Byzantine texts with an instructive and advisory character in regards to statecraft and the art of governing which were named, not only in historiography, but also in literature, by the general term "mirror for princes".[506] This term, which first appears in the 12th century in a text of the chronicler Godfrey of Viterbo and was subsequently used by later medieval Western European writings of this type, was not known to the Byzantine literature. In fact, it has been agreed that most of the works classified under the term "mirror for princes" do not simultaneously include all the features of the definition which was established by scholars in the past.[507] Although this principle for terminological naming of Byzantine texts of an instructive and laudatory nature has been rejected and is not practiced in the last few years,[508] nevertheless, due to the fact that these contain certain advice and guidelines which can be related to statecraft and the art of governing, and through it with the aspects related to foreign policy of a state, more precisely to its diplomacy and strategy, they will be perceived in this context i.e., as a homogeneous literary genre and reviewed according to their importance.

The Byzantine manuscripts which contain laudatory, encouraging, instructive and advisory content have been noted throughout the millennial existence of the Empire, starting from the late Roman period, through the time of the Macedonian dynasty, Kekaumenos and the archbishop Theophylaktos of Ohrid from the end of the 11th century,[509] until the last ruling dynasty of the Palaiologos. However, on this occasion, only those texts which could have influenced the knowledge acquired by the Byzantine government (i.e., the emperor and his closest associates) regarding statecraft between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century will be analysed in the context of foreign policy and diplomacy. This group of writings includes the speech of Bishop Synesius of Cyrene before emperor Arcadius, the speech of deacon Agapetus before Justinian I, the text *Dialogue on Political Science*, as well as also the eulogy of Paul the Silentiary, all dating from the late Roman period. The rest of the manuscripts which indicate aspects of the Byzantine statecraft appear several centuries apart, in the time of the Macedonian

506 For an overview see Günter Prinzing, "Byzantine Mirrors for Princes: An Overview", in *A Critical Companion to the 'Mirrors for Princes' Literature*, ed. Noëlle-Laetitia Perret and Stéphane Péquignot (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2023), 108-135.

507 Hana Coufalová Bohrnová, "Mirrors for Princes: Genuine Byzantine Genre or Academic Construct?", *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 22, no.1 (2017): 5-14.

508 Bohrnová, "Mirrors for Princes", 13-14.; Prinzing, "Byzantine Mirrors for Princes", 108-109.

509 *Kekavmen*, 242.1-274.12.; Theophylacte D'Achrida, *Discours, Traites, Poesies*, ed. Paul Gautier (Tesalonique: Assosiation de Recherches Byzantines, 1980), 178-211.

dynasty. Among these, the letter of the patriarch Photius to the Bulgarian prince Boris stands out, followed by the advices of Emperor Basileios I to his son and future ruler, Leon VI, as well as *De Administrando Imperio*, a manuscript compiled under the patronage of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos.

First work on this list is a speech by Synesius of Cyrene entitled *On the Imperial Reign of the Autocrator Arcadius* and it was composed for a political purpose.[510] It contains praises, counsels, lessons and guidance which were characteristic of this genre, while covering most aspects of statecraft and the art of governing in such a way that they could be divided into separate chapters. The author dwells on numerous principles that the imperial government had to adhere to and strive for, in order for its subjects to perceive it as virtuous and just, followed by writings on the role of the army and soldiers, on the bureaucracy, as well as on the current problems that the state faced and how these could be resolved.[511] Synesius devotes one of the passages of his speech specifically to advices related to envoys, which he presents as a state activity of highest importance. According to his opinion "...the institution of embassies, sacred as it is in other respects, is in this connection of the highest value. Conferring with these, the king will know that which is afar no less than that which is near, nor will foresight for his kingdom be bounded by the sense of sight. He can even lift up what has fallen, though he does not see it, he can give gifts to the nations in trouble and write off the burdens of the state to those who have long groaned under them. He will break off a war that threatens, and will terminate a war which has broken out, and will adjust everything else in time, for by the agency of embassies he will be able, like the god, 'to see and hear everything'. To these let him be accessible, and 'gentle as a father', whether they come from near or from afar, for so I have heard Homer speaking once for all of the king that is at peace with himself".[512] However, Synesius does not speak specifically about envoys sent to other states, nations and tribes i.e., about Late Roman foreign policy, or, again, about envoys sent by foreign rulers. This passage also refers to the importance of those envoys that, like him, arrived in Constantinople from the distant regions of the empire to be received by the monarch on some state business. In his case, the goal was to get tax relief for the province of Libya Superior from where he came.[513]

[510] For Synesius and his work, but also for the real purpose for his visit and audience with the emperor for which his speech was intended, see Alex Petkas, "The King in Words: Performance and Fictions in Synesius' De Regno", *American Journal of Philology* 139, no.1 (2018): 123-151.; Timothy D. Barnes, "Synesius in Constantinople", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 27, no.1 (1986): 93-112.

[511] *Synesii, Theodori Mopsuesteni, Arsenii*, Patrologiae curcus completus, Series Graeca, Tomus LXVI, ed. Jacques P. Migne (Paris, 1859), col.1053-1108.

[512] Ibid, col. 1100.

[513] Petkas, "The King in Words", 125. For the policy of provinces and cities to send special envoys to the em-

This political view does not exist in the works of Agapetus the Deacon, Paul the Silentiary, or the anonymous author of the *Dialogue on Political Science*. All these authors, in addition to the laudatory and exhortatory tone, dwell on lessons and advice, but also present their own thoughts related to statecraft and the art of governing.[514] Although Agapetus the Deacon indicates in his work that the sovereign should have been worried about everything that concerns the Empire,[515] yet, like the author of the *Dialogue on Political Science*, he dwells solely on the domestic policies that the emperor had to follow so that the state could prosper: observance of laws, suppression of corruption, fairness of taxes, care for administration and the military affairs, and other similar matters.[516]

The letter sent by patriarch Photios to the Bulgarian prince is a text with a didactic content, a kind of exposition of the true faith composed of general guiding principles that Boris had to adhere to as a Christian. Inside there are almost no other advices and instructions related to the art of governance except those of a personal and religious nature. Foreign relations and diplomacy are not the aim of the author and these are completely left out of the letter, which is to be expected, because at that time Boris was a ruler who had recently been baptized and whose reign was to be firmly directed according to Christian norms.[517]

The sixty-six advisory chapters of Emperor Basileios I to his son and heir to the throne, Leon VI, are a typical representative of Byzantine manuscripts of this type. The text is a set of instructions that were appropriate and necessary in order for the future ruler to successfully master the art of governing. The main focus of the advices and instructions is more on presenting an image for an ideal Christian ruler and his practice of government, and less on advice of a practical nature that was directly related to aspects of state affairs, for example legislation, bribe and corruption, tax fairness, as well as on relations with the imperial officials. Although the author of the text speaks about maintaining peace throughout the state, however, this refers to the domestic state policy and not to foreign relations.[518]

peror see Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (31 BC-AD 337) (London: Duckworth, 1977), 375-385, 410-420.; Werner Eck, "Diplomacy as part of the Administrative Process in the Roman Empire", in *Diplomats and Diplomacy in the Roman World*, ed. Claude Eilers (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 193-207.

514 For all these works from the late antique period and their detailed analysis in *Three Political Voices from the Age of Justinian. Agapetus, Advice to the Emperor. Dialogue on Political Science. Paul the Silentiary, Description of Hagia Sophia*, tr. Peter N. Bell (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 148, 158.

515 *Three Political Voices*, 108.

516 See *Three Political Voices*, 109-110, 147-148, 158.

517 *Photii Constantinopolitani Patriarchae*, Patrologiae curcus completus, Series Graeca, Tomus CII, ed. Jacques P. Migne (Parisiis, 1900), Col.627-695. For a detailed analysis of the letter see Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, 112-152.

518 *Leonis, Romanorum Imperatoris Augusti, cognomine Sapietis, opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia*, Patro-

In terms of content, *De Administrando Imperio* is a completely different work compared to the others. Instead of a text consisting of advices on what the character of the ideal ruler should be, it is more of a manual with practical instructions composed, among other things, of reports and documents from officials related to the foreign policy of the state, as well as of numerous data of ethnographic and geographical origin, ideology, and with passages from the recent and distant history of the surrounding peoples, seen from the author's point of view. It is also assumed that this work to some extend reflected the Byzantine ethnographic traditions that existed at the time of its composition, today referred to under the term *origo gentis*.[519] As a result of *De Administrando Imperio*'s diverse composition of information, which is divided into four categories, historians have shown exceptional interest in this manuscript due to the fact that it is the only text dealing with the earliest medieval history of Central, Eastern, and South-eastern Europe.[520] In that context, this work of Porphyrogennetos provokes numerous debates, mostly for its historical and ethnographic aspects in relation to the Slavs and their migration to the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, which has resulted in a significant number of scientific papers.[521]

One of the reasons why this manuscript was considered part of this group of didactic texts is not only its original title which reads *Constantine, In Christ eternal emperor, emperor of the Romans, to his son Romanus, the emperor crowned by God, and born in the purple*, but also the author's statement that this work of his is, in essence, a kind of a doctrine, a set of teachings and instructions, so that the person for whom it is intended shall "...hold skilfully upon the helm of the rule".[522] Further confirmation of this is the

logiae curcus completus, Series Graeca, Tomus LXVI, ed. Jacques P. Migne (Paris, 1863), XXI-LVI.

519 Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity*, 89, 92. For the connection between the *origo gentis* and the migrations of peoples see Daniel Džino, "Between migrations and origo gentis: Population movements", in *The Routledge Handbook of East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, 500-1300, ed. Florin Curta (London/New York: Routledge, 2022), 23-33.

520 For the division into categories see James Howard-Johnston, "The De administrando imperio: A Re-examination of the Text and a Re-evaluation of its evidence about the Rus", in *Les centres proto-urbain russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient*, ed. Michael Kazanski, Anne Nercessian and Constantine Zuckermann (Paris: Pierre Zech Éditeur, 2000), 304, 310-314.

521 In regards to the research and study of *De Administrando Imperio* the scholarly papers that exist are too numerous to list. Regarding the debate related to the Slavs from the western regions of the Balkans, I will single out only a few, such as Hrvoje Gračanin and Jana Škrgulja, "Refashioning of Historical Reality: Three stories by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and the Early Medieval history of Croatia", in *Samuel's State and Byzantium: History, Legend, Tradition, Heritage, Proceedings of the International Symposium "Days of Justinian I", Skopje*, 17-18 October, 2014, ed. Mitko B. Panov (Skopje: Euro-Balkan University, 2015), 24-34.; Daniel Džino, "'Becoming Slav, 'Becoming Croat': New Approaches in research of identities in post-Roman Illyricum", *Hortus Artium Medievalium 14* (2008): 195-205.; Tibor Živković, "An Unknown Source of Constantine Porphyrogenitus", *Byzantinoslavica* 68, no.1 (2010): 129-143.

522 *DAI*, prooimion.9-12.

advice that the ruler must study what is known of the near and distant nations in order to understand "...the difference between other nations, their origins and customs and manner of life, and the position and climate of the land they dwell in, its geographical description and measurement, and moreover concerning events which have occurred at various times between the Romans and different nations; [but also] the difference between each of these nations, and how either to treat with and conciliate them, or to make war upon and oppose".[523]

It has already been pointed out that, compared to other texts, the manuscript De Administrando Imperio is a unique and original work because it presents information that fully relates to the Byzantine foreign policy and diplomacy.[524] The fact that this document is not mentioned in the writings of other authors is probably because it was available only to a limited number of people who were high in the hierarchy of the state[525] and contained knowledge that should not have been available to everyone, since it had the power to intimidate the surrounding states, nations and tribes.[526] It seems that the reason behind its composition is that foreign relations were within the domain of the personal duties of the Byzantine emperor, despite the fact that significant parts of the assignments were performed by the officials from the imperial office of the Post (logothesion tou dromou) and the departments that were in charge of this segment of state affairs.

Although the author himself states that the purpose for compiling of this text was to present relevant information and practical advice that would allow the future ruler to successfully conduct foreign policy, nevertheless, there exist an opinion that he failed to realize this idea as imagined.[527] From a didactic point of view the manuscript was not useful because although it contained information about the central role of the Pechenegs in the Byzantine policies in the Black Sea region, or an account of the recent relations with the principalities from the Caucasus, most of these did not possess contemporary relevance to the current diplomacy, and the advices were also not of a practical nature. What this work only served was to strengthen the Byzantine imperial hegemony among

[523] Ibid, prooimion.19-27.

[524] Jonathan Shepard, "Soldiers, missionaries and diplomacy under Gibbon's eyes", in *Edward Gibbon and Empire*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick and Roland Quinault (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 91-92.; Predrag Komatina, "Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio and the Byzantine Historiography of the mid-10th Century", *Zbornik radova vizantološkog instituta* 56 (2019): 40-46.; Gračanin and Škrgulja, "Refashioning of Historical Reality", 25-27.; Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity*, 88.

[525] *DAI*, 16-17. See also Shepard, "Soldiers, missionaries", 93.; Gračanin and Škrgulja, "Refashioning of Historical Reality", 26.

[526] *DAI*, prooimion.27-31.

[527] Jonathan Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 800-1204: means and ends", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992), 66.

the client states, especially in the Balkans and the region of Transcaucasia.[528] According to others, it was composed with a clear political intention, to impose "historical" rights of the Byzantine Empire over regions that were of political interest i.e., one of its goals was to help establish the Byzantine *oecumene* through formation of delicate diplomatic network and, in contrast to the unlimited Roman imperialism, a commonwealth of nations which would be linked through Christianity and the recognition of precedence of the Byzantine emperor based on the political ideology of a universal Christian empire.[529]

Although there was a certain discrepancy between the author's stated aims and the content of *De Administrando Imperio*, nevertheless, it is emphasized that this was, in fact, a consequence of the absence of a classical tradition for writing treatises related to the theory and practice of conducting international relations, as there were for warfare and military strategy,[530] while the knowledge which Porphyrogennetos compiled, he actually discovered through his own wisdom.[531] It is further indicated that this work presents information not only about the special connection between the emperor and diplomacy, but also, among other things, about the use of the near and distant past, the antiquity of the state, as well as other additional arguments for the imposing of the Byzantine political hegemony in the real, pragmatic, political foreign affairs' relations, and to prevent imposition of another's authority in the regions of interest: Southern Italy, the Balkan Peninsula, the Pontic steppe and the Caucasus. What can be observed is complete absence of some states and regions, as well as a partial political neglect of the Islamic world from the time of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos. Nevertheless, despite the numerous inconsistencies in many of its aspects, the scholars still indicate that *De Administrando Imperio* is a diplomatic manual with knowledge, information, advices and practical lessons on how to successfully maintain political relations with the neighbouring states, nations and tribes.[532]

De Administrando Imperio is a multifaceted studied work, with a research focus ranging from how many authors the manuscript had and who were they, through a comprehensive analysis of its information-rich content, all the way to its connection with other writings.[533] The main reason why this text was compiled under the patronage and

528 *Kaldellis, Ethnography after Antiquity*, 88-89.; *DAI* Volume II, 3-4.

529 Džino, "'Becoming Slav, 'Becoming Croat'", 198.; Gračanin and Škrgulja, "Refashioning of Historical Reality", 26.; Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity*, 90.

530 Shepard, "Soldiers, missionaries", 91.; Howard-Johnston, "The De administrando imperio", 304.

531 *DAI*, prooimion.24-25.

532 For more details see Shepard, "Soldiers, missionaries", 93-98.; Howard-Johnston, "The De administrando imperio", 306-307, 314-321.; Gračanin and Škrgulja, "Refashioning of Historical Reality", 25, 27.; Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity*, 88. On the assumption that the Islamic world from the time of Konstantinos VII was covered in *De Administrando Imperio* see Komatina, "Constantine Porphyrogenitus", 42-43.

533 Komatina, "Constantine Porphyrogenitus", 42-62.

direct supervision of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos is probably that as during the late Roman period, diplomacy was a personal obligation of the emperor.[534] The continuity of this work with the foreign policy of this period, and even with the period before it, can also be observed through its inclusion of various information which were part of ethnography and geography, since these were also often used by the Roman state in its foreign policy. The practicality of this work in the sphere of diplomacy is often emphasized as a collection of briefing materials strictly intended for negotiations, propaganda and other relations with foreign rulers.[535] The Byzantine diplomatic correspondence,[536] as well as Liudprand of Cremona's account of his second diplomatic visit to Constantinople,[537] in fact, confirms that numerous *origo gentis*, historical facts, as well as various other narratives (regardless of whether they were all reliable, false, modified or created for some political purpose), and which are integral part of *De Administrando Imperio*, were practically applied in foreign policy.

Despite its different perceptions in the field of Byzantine studies, the didactic work *De Administrando Imperio*, as any other relevant authentic text, is fundamentally a reflection of the people and the time when this work was composed. As for diplomacy, it indicates not only the worldview of the author and his knowledge, but also the views and attitudes of the state and the people in power regarding what was considered relevant in terms of international relations and the achievement of political ends, about their *modus operandi*. Hence, in order to be able to better perceive the importance that *De Administrando Imperio* seems to have had for the Byzantine diplomatic practices, this work should not be seen in isolation, but only in context with other sources, such as theoretical treatises, correspondence or, in turn, chronicles that contain fragmentary information which report about the diplomacy of the Byzantine Empire.

Of all these didactic works, if one part of the speech of Synesius of Cyrene is singled out, only *De Administrando Imperio* is entirely directed towards the problems of foreign policy. Although there is a possibility that the anonymous author of the *Dialogue on Political Science* was also concerned with this problem, its fragmented state and the parts that have survived do not lead to such a conclusion.[538] Although even the *Strategikon* of

534 Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 23-24.; Shepard, "Soldiers, missionaries", 93-94.

535 Howard-Johnston, "The De administrando imperio", 319.; Shepard, "Soldiers, missionaries", 98.; Boris A. Todorov, "Byzantine myths of origins and their functions", *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 2, no.4 (2008): 66.

536 For one such example, see Nicholas, *Letters*, 5.128-143.

537 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 270.

538 Additionally, as indicated by Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic. People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, Mass./London, England: Harvard University Press, 2015), 4, *Dialogue on Political Science* is a unique work whose level of influence in Byzantine society remains unknown since it cannot be compared

Kekaumenos, written in the second half of the 11th century, has a separate chapter dedicated for advices to the emperor, nevertheless, it does not refer to foreign policy.[539] The fact that diplomacy was the focus of at least some of the learned people is evidenced by the chapter *On Envoys*, which is an integral part of several manuscripts and fully refers to the international relations of the state.[540] More precisely, it focuses on the embassies that arrived in the Byzantine capital, but also on the envoys that the imperial government had send on missions abroad. This is noticeable from the very first sentence, from which it can be assumed that the author was familiar with foreign policy i.e., with the function of the embassies. The chapter begins with the information that "...envoys are sent to us and by us. Those who are sent to us should be received honourably and generously, for everyone holds envoys in esteem". In regards to the envoys that the Byzantine government sent abroad, they should have been "...men who have reputation of being religious, who have never been denounced for any crime or publicly condemned". Furthermore, he advises the imperial government how to deal with envoys if they "...come from a very distant country, and other peoples dwell between them and us, then we may show them anything we like in our country. We can act in like manner even if their country is located next to ours but is much weaker. But if they are greatly superior to us, either in the size of their army or its courage, then we should not draw their attention to our wealth or the beauty of our women, but point out the number of our men, the polish of our weapons, and the height of our walls".[541]

At an overall, the reason behind the poor presence of foreign policy in the didactic works, as well as its meagre attention in the studies of the educated individuals of the time, apparently, should be sought in the fact that diplomacy was considered as part of the personal domain of the sovereign, and thus, this segment of the art of statecraft did not represent a subject of wider interest in society, but rather, probably remained limited to the Byzantine emperor and his closest associates in charge of these state affairs. This is the result of the fact that international relations in the Middle Ages differ from the relations that exist in the modern world, which are a result of centuries-long civilizational development. As I mentioned earlier, the people of the Middle Ages were not familiar with the aspects of diplomacy as we know and understand it today. It was seen more as an exception to normal social developments, than as a norm. A typical example of the different perception of international relations and diplomacy in the past is the reaction of the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz. On the request of the Byzantine envoy sent by Konstantinos VII

with another, similar text from the same period.

539 *Kekavmen*, 242.1-266.14.

540 Douglas Lee and Jonathan Shepard, "A Double Life: Placing the Peri Presbeon", *Byzantinoslavica* 52 (1991): 15-25.

541 On Strategy, 43.3-15.

Porphyrogennetos during 957-958 to send an embassy to the emperor just as during the past his master regularly sent envoys to him, while the Caliph did not send any, Al-Mu'izz replied that: "People send ambassadors to other people for one of the following two reasons: either because they are in need of something or because they have an obligation towards the person (to whom they send the ambassador). We do not know, thanks be to God, that we are in need of your master or that we are in any way obliged to him; why, then, should we send an ambassador to him?".[542]

The silence in the works titled as "mirror for princes" regarding diplomacy, indicate that no idea or concept related to what we today mean by international relations, circulated within the Constantinopolitan intellectual circles. Furthermore, the lack of information confirms that diplomacy was completely in the realm of the emperor's personal affairs and, apart from a few closest associates, it was out of sight for the imperial educated elite and the rest of the Byzantine population. However, as much as it is not clearly visible at first in the didactic texts, nevertheless, the different approach and attitude of the Byzantines and their government towards the relations they established, or intended to establish with the other political entities compared to the rest of the medieval states, nations and tribes, a practice that is also confirmed by the statement of the Fatimid Caliph al -Mu'izz, is what distinguished the Byzantine Empire from the other medieval polities. This distinctive Byzantine approach to international relations i.e., diplomacy played a considerable role in the millennial existence the state.

Shaping the Byzantine Statecraft: Factors of Influence

It is obvious that the Byzantines, not only the educated elite, but also those who were in high positions of power, including the emperor himself, were interested in the problems of statecraft by studying its multifaceted aspects. The set of values, i.e. principles which were the goal of this studying process, such as ethics of governance, methods of political action, various military strategies and tactics, state interests and ends, as well as a comprehensive strategy unwittingly created as a result of the art of governing (which also included diplomacy), the foundations of which should be sought in ancient Rome, was a result of the interaction of several factors: political ideology (if it was established), geopolitical position of the state and the resources it had, military traditions, idiosyncratic behaviour of the rulers, historical and cultural heritage, but also the social

[542] Samuel M. Stern, "An embassy of the Byzantine emperor to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz", *Byzantion* 20 (1950): 247-248.

movements that could appear between different groups inside the society itself. However, this set of values or principles were not static and unchanging. They could actually be, and were occasionally, modified in order to be of exceptional use to the next imperial government in the achievement of its policy, or to respond to the changes that begun to occur in the near and more distant regions of the world.[543]

In the event that a sufficiently powerful political philosophy was established in a society, due to its influence, it would be the primary factor and could constitute the basis for statecraft and its strategy since it resulted from the needs and claims, in this case, of the Byzantine emperor and his elite i.e., from their political and ideological interests and ends. At the same time, it would not only determine the geographical scope of the upcoming strategic planning, but depending on the character and power of the ideology itself, it would also enable its continuity, since there was a possibility that the future generations would identify with its principles.

In regard to the Byzantine Empire, the first ideological aspect was the political philosophy put forth by Eusebius of Caesarea which, during the first half of the 4th century, presented a general theory that focused on the sovereign, but also on the overall state itself, or more precisely, on to the role that they were supposed to play in the world. The ideas that emerged from his political theory had made possible to transform the old pagan Roman concept of a god-emperor into an ideology about the divine origin of imperial power without any major political upheavals in the Empire. This then led to a partial modification of the statute and position of the emperor in the state, to be exact, of his attitude towards the Christian religion, but also of the sacral duties he had towards it, which in turn resulted from the title of pontifex that the Byzantine rulers carried until the reign of Emperor Anastasius I (491-518).[544] As there was one God in heaven so there was to be one emperor on earth, an idea that was acceptable to the Christian population and laid the foundation for the official "theocratic" ideology of the imperial cult, an ideology that was gradually reshaped over the centuries. In doing so, Byzantine Empire was presented as the sole Christian empire in the world (oecumene), earthly replica (μίμησις) of the Kingdom of Heaven and its order (τάξις), an instrument through which God's plan for salvation of mankind would be carried out, whose destiny would last until his second coming, ordained for universal hegemony and dominion.[545]

[543] About the theory of a comprehensive state-level strategy, termed by the contemporary scholars as grand strategy, and the factors that shaped it, with a brief overview on Byzantine and Roman strategy, see Murray, "Thoughts", 1-21.; Murray and Grimsley, "Introduction: On strategy", 7-23. According to Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 409, "...all states have a Grand strategy, whether they know it or not".

[544] See Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 173-178.

[545] For the political philosophy of Eusebius of Caesarea, see Norman H. Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire", in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974), 168-172.

Other aspect that had influenced the process of shaping the political philosophy, thus specifying the Byzantine position in the world, was the actual origin of the state i.e., the perception of the Byzantines about their own country which from a formal and legal standpoint *de facto* represented an uninterrupted continuity of the Roman Empire, and its sovereign was the only true legitimate heir of its emperors. This view is constantly repeated in all Byzantine sources, starting from the late Roman period when the new capital was built on the Bosporus. In regards to its population and elite, the Byzantine Empire was seen as Roman res publica i.e., πολιτεία, which from the viewpoint of its current political development was in its monarchical stage and where the supreme institution of power was termed as βασιλεία led by an emperor.[546]

According to the imperial ideology which emerged from the interaction of these two aspects, the Byzantine emperor was portrayed as a successor of Constantine the Great – even to the first *Augustus* – sovereign of the Roman citizens and their πολιτεία, as ισαπόστολος – "equal to the apostles" – called by God to rule as his deputy on earth, guardian and protector of Christians, while the state he governed was rightfully perceived as a uninterupted continuation of the glorious Rome, the one true empire in the world, an earthly replica of the Kingdom of Heaven, a universal instrument through which God's plan for salvation of all mankind would be carried out. This image, established by itself for oneself, as well as for one's own state, was constantly publicly emphasized and repeated through various imperial ceremonies held not only in the Great Palace, but also throughout the streets, forums and churches of Constantinople,[547] in court acclamations and rhetoric, and in everyday church liturgies.[548] This is also noted in the letters of the pa-

[546] About the Byzantine Empire as a continuation of the Roman res publica (πολιτεία), as well as for the existence of a secular state and theocratic "imperial idea" in Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 19-31, 165-198. See also Antonio Carile, "Political theology in Byzantium as seen by 20th century historians", *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage 7* (2007): 73-109. On the Roman identity see Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 42-119, and Anthony Kaldellis, *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium* (Cambridge, Mass. / London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019), 1-120.; Jonathan Shepard, "Introduction (i): Approaching Byzantium", in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 16–20.; Ioannis Stouraitis, "Roman identity in Byzantium: a critical approach", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 107 (2014): 175–220.

[547] For the imperial ceremonies see *The Book of Ceremonies*. See also McCormick, *Eternal Victory*.; Michael McCormick, "Analyzing imperial ceremonies", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 35 (1985): 1-20.; Averil Cameron, "The construction of court ritual: the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*", in *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. David Cannadine and Simon Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 106-136.

[548] About the political ideology in Donald M. Nicol, "Byzantine political thought", in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350-c.1450*, ed. James H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 51-82.; Paul Alexander, "The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes", in *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe: Byzantium, the Balkans and Russia*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Abingdon: Rout-

triarch Nikolaos Mystikos, who declares that the Byzantine Empire "...is above all earthly rule, which the Emperor of all has fixed singly on the earth".[549]

The geopolitical position of the state has a significant role in shaping the statecraft and its strategy. Like the political philosophy, this factor had the power not only to form certain strategic concept or, more precisely, to determine the political interests and ends of the ruling elite, but also to establish the methods, techniques, means and praxis for its field implementation. From that aspect, the Byzantine Empire was in a very unfavorable situation. It was continuously surrounded on all sides by dangerous enemies, and was frequently fighting simultaneously on two fronts, and if Southern Italy is included - on three. With the rise of the Arabs around the middle of the 7th century, the area of the Mediterranean also became a field of battle where, in order to secure its long coast and equip the imperial fleet, the Byzantine government spend considerable resources.[550] The emergence of an equally powerful political philosophy on its eastern border led to a redefinition of the Byzantine strategic and political priorities. The ensuing crisis from the middle of the 7th century, accompanied by the military defeats and loss of territories, further shaped the role of the emperor and the Byzantine Empire from an ideological aspect, as well as the political interests and ends, and the praxis, in which they were to be achieved.[551] The Bulgars' success in establishing a state in the Balkans towards the end of the same century only worsened the already difficult situation. Liudprand of Cremona very vividly portraits how serious was the position in which the Byzantine Empire found itself throughout its history.[552]

Next important segment was the military tradition. Byzantine military thought was a continuation, and usually a conscious imitation and adaptation of previous military manuals dating back to the Roman period, if not before.[553] Byzantine Christendom was not that different from the pagan Roman and Hellenic traditions, and thus their military

ledge, 2016), 18.; Ahrweiler, L'idéologie politique, 11-13.; Steven Runciman, *Byzantine Theocracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 22-25.; George T. Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian People", in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, eds. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 35-36, 38.

549 Nicholas, *Letters*, 8.47-48.

550 More details about the crisis of the 7th century and its impact on the changes in the state see John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The transformation of a culture. Revised edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

551 For the internal changes in the Byzantine Empire, see John F. Haldon, *The Empire that Would not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival 640–740* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016).

552 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 50.

553 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 239-265.; Walter E. Kaegi Jr., "Some Thoughts on Byzantine Military Strategy", *The Hellenic Studies Lecture* (Brookline, Mass: Hellenic College Press, 1983), 10-11.; John F. Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565-1204* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 37.

principles were fully compatible with the Christian art of warfare. The most important military instructions that have repeatedly appeared in numerous ancient manuals, for instance avoiding direct battle, intimidation of the enemy, scorched-earth tactics, creating food shortages, using deserters and spies to spread misinformation, were also an integral part of the Byzantine manuals.[554] But the Christian religion also had its influence. And although Christianity played an active role in the Byzantine army and in the shaping of the art of warfare over the following centuries,[555] several church fathers from the time of the late Roman period, such as Origen, Tertullian, Lactantius or St. Basil, publicly expressed their suspicions about the involvement of Christians in military activities with the aim of taking someone's life, and even suggested imposing sanctions on the soldiers.[556]

[554] Kaegi, "Some Thoughts", 12.

[555] *Das Strategikon*, II.18.13-17, VII.B.17.4-7, suggests that in the camp before the battle "...all, led by the priests, the general, and the other officers, should recite the "Kyrie eleison" (Lord have mercy) for some time in unison". The Author of "On Skirmishing", *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and tr. George T. Dennis (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 19.32-35, 19.52-54, indicates that the soldiers "...choose to brave dangers on behalf of our holy emperors and all the Christian people...these are defenders and, after God, the saviors of Christians". Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed. and tr. John F. Haldon (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), C. 468, names the military forces as "...soldiers of Christ". For tenth-century examples of liturgies, various rites and prayers performed by priests in the Byzantine army, noted in *Praecepta Militaria* and *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranus, see Eric McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2008), 45, 57, 59 127, also, *A Tenth-Century Byzantine Military Manual: The Sylloge Tacticorum,* tr. Georgios Chatzelis and Jonathan Harris (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 44.1. For an overview of the influence which Christianity had on Byzantine warfare, see John F. Haldon, "'Fighting for Peace' Justifying Warfare and Violence in the Medieval East Roman World", in *The Cambridge World History of Violence Vol.2 500-1500 C.E.*, ed. Matthew S. Gordon et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 498-505.

[556] *Origen: Contra Celsum*, tr. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), VIII.73. See chapter XI of "De Corona" and chapter XIX of "De Idololatria" by *Tertullian. Vol. 1. Apologetic and Practical Treatises*, tr. Charles Dodgson (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1842), 176-178, 247. According to Lactantius, "De Mortibus Persecutorum", in *Ante-Nicene Fathers. The Writing of the Fathers down to A.D.325*. Vol. VII, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), XXXIV, Christians should pray in the interests of the Roman Empire. A strictly conservative line in Christianity was the teaching of Saint Basile, *Lettres*, vol.2, ed. Yves Courtonne (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1961), CLXXXVIII.13, according to whom soldiers who have committed murder in combat should be excluded from communion for three years. In the 10th century, the Constantinopolitan church hierarchy rejected the initiative of Nikephoros II Phokas to "...establish a law according to which those who fell during the wars should have equal honor with the holy martyrs and be celebrated with hymns and feasts..." with reference to the thirteenth canon of St. Basil. More about the initiative of Nikephoros II Phokas in Patrick Viscuso, "Christian Participation in Warfare. A Byzantine view", in *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis*, ed. Timothy S. Miller and John Nesbitt (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995), 37-38. For an analysis of the teachings of the early church fathers regarding the participation of Christians in the imperial army see John Helgeland, "Christians and the Roman Army from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine", in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.23.1 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1979), 724–834.; Louis J. Swift, "War and the Christian Conscience I: The Early Years", in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.23.1 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1979), 835-868.; Haldon, "'Fighting for Peace'", 496-497.; Dennis, "Defenders", 37.

The military manuals clearly indicate that the imperial government was fully aware of the imbalance which existed between the Empire and its enemies. The *Strategikon* of Maurikios recommends using various tactical skills instead of a direct battle, for it is not "...like some laymen might imagine, by the number of bodies, by unquestioning boldness, or by plain assault that battles are decided but, under God, by strategy and skill. Strategy makes use of times and places, surprises and various tricks to outwit the enemy with the idea of achieving its objectives even without actual fighting".[557] The author also recommends that the military commanders should constantly use "...their tactical and strategic skills..."[558], and avoid direct confrontations as much as possible. For the Byzantines, warfare was like hunting. Not for a moment should one think "...simply to overpower the enemy in the open, hand to hand, face to face, even though you might appear to win, is an enterprise which is very risky and can result in serious harm".[559] The use of similar military tactics was advised by Emperor Leon VI just several centuries later[560] and by the author of *Campaign organization and tactics* in the 10th century.[561]

The available resources were another influencing factor. After the loss of the rich provinces in Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa, in comparison to its adversaries the Byzantine military capabilities, at an overall or individually (if the Arabs are taken into account), were limited. The Byzantines were fully aware of the imbalance that existed between them and their enemies.[562] Warfare should be avoided at all costs because it would further increase the financial pressure on the imperial treasury. This is clearly stated in the military manuals. The author of *On Strategy* describes the financial problems that the Byzantine government was facing in order to maintain its own security even when it was at the height of its military power. According to him, the imperial treasury "...in principle is concerned with paying the soldiers. Each year most of the public revenues are spent for this purpose".[563] The loss of lives, but also the destruction of land and property that would

557 *Das Strategikon*, II.1.8-14.

558 Ibid, prooimion.46.

559 Ibid, VII.45-52.

560 According to the *Taktika*, XX.11, it "...is safer and more advantageous to overcome the enemy by planning and generalship then by physical force and power and the hazards of face-to-face battle".

561 As in the military manuals of the past, here the author of "Campaign organization and tactics", *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and tr. George T. Dennis (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 20.12-14, advises to avoid any military confrontations on the field where the enemy had the tactical advantage, for "... wherever you are unable to use your hands, your horse, and your weapons, while the enemy is able to do so, then the danger is obvious". Such vigilance before commencing a military conflict, to which the military commanders should have adhered to, has been emphasized several times in *Campaign organization and tactics*, 13.4-8, 19.7-10, 21.43-50, 25.24-26.

562 John F. Haldon, "Byzantium to the twelfth century", in *The Cambridge History of War. Volume II. War and the Medieval World*, ed. Anne Curry and David A. Graff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 118-123.

563 On Strategy, 2.18-21.

result from constant warfare, in a state where most of the income in the imperial treasury actually came from the agricultural production, could totaly undermine the economic base and seriously disrupt the fiscal system. Therefore, when the Byzantine Empire was no longer able to wage war, in order to prevent a greater crisis, whether political or financial, the imperial government "...choose to make peace, even though it may cause us some disadvantage. When faced with two evils, the lesser is to be chosen. Negotiating for peace may be chosen before other means, since it might very well offer the best prospect for protecting our own interests."[564] Therefore, the efficient distribution of its limited resources and assets was of primary importance for the government, aimed at achieving the best possible outcome on the field.[565] It was similar with the human resources which the Byzantines had at their disposal. From the view point of the Byzantine government, they were always outnumbered compared to the enemies that surrounded them. The Byzantine authors are emphasizing this very clearly when reporting on the size of the enemy, especially in regard to the steppe peoples.[566] Therefore, if the emperor wanted to launch a military offensive against an enemy, or to successfully defend from their attacks, he had to withdraw troops from another front in order to provide the army with strong logistical support and sufficient reserve of manpower. Such was the case with the offensive military campaigns of the late 6th century during the reign of Emperor Maurikios, in the 7th century with the Sasanians and afterwards the Arab threat, the war against the Slavs and the Bulgars during the second half of the 8th century, or Basileios II's Balkan war against Samuil from the late 10th and early 11th century, when the Byzantine government transferred significant military forces from Asia Minor to the Balkans and vice versa.[567]

Another factor that had a significant impact on the statecraft and its strategy, as well on the process of its implementation and modification, was the idiosyncratic behaviour of the ruler. In fact, until recently, the conducting of certain activities, military or political, for realization of state interests and ends or, on the other hand, to maintain these when already have been achieved, but were under external threat, largely depended on the personal characteristics and affinities of the person who was on the throne and his ability to judge the auspiciousness of the situation, not only internally in his own state

564 Ibid, 6.26-29.

565 Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 38, 40-41.

566 Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 249-250.

567 See Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium*, 260-261, 294-296.; Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 40-41. There are countless examples of troop transfers from the West to the East and vice versa in *Theophanes*, 498, 511, 525, 617, 672-673. Such obligation is noted in *Theophanes Continuatus*, 181.16-18, who speaks about the military obligation of the thematic armies of Thrakes and Makedonia. According to him, in the first half of the 9th century there was a law according to which "...the strategos of Thrakes and Makedonia, when there was peace with the Bulgarians, they [had the duty] to share the danger and fight together with the eastern armies".

but also externally in the surrounding regions.[568] This is precisely why the shaping of the state-level strategy remained outside the bureaucratic processes until the 20th century, mostly due to the strong resistance of the rulers regarding the penetration of educated people in this sphere, but also as a result of the relative simplicity of the pre-industrial strategic issues, as well as the nature of medieval bureaucracy itself.[569] As for the diplomacy of the medieval states which managed to survive long enough to form certain long-term interests and ends, like the Byzantine Empire, the first notice in the sources is the discontinuity of implementation and realization of those long-term interests and ends, and their reappearing during the reign of more energetic emperor, or of several emperors in succession (i.e. during the reigns of the Warrior Emperors in the second half of the 10th century). This was essentially a consequence of the principles of statecraft, rather than a lack of long-term foreign policy, where despite the considerable influence of advisors, the absolute right to decide when, how and whether any goal, interest or strategy would be implemented or achieved, was concentrated in the hands of only one person, the emperor.

It is necessary to point out that the Byzantine statecraft and the strategy which emerged from it were not shaped out of nothing. Despite the fact that both for the period between the middle of the 9th and beginning of the 11th century, as well as before and after, the Byzantine government and its elite knew how to improve their knowledge by learning from their own mistakes, errors in judgement and political miscalculations, and through introduction of reforms, nevertheless, it has already been in contact with the centuries-old experience of conducting state affairs and shaping and adapting state strategy, which included foreign relations and diplomacy, due to the fact that the empire they governed was in fact, a medieval continuation of the ancient Roman state. Hence, it can be assumed that the historical, cultural as well as the political heritage of ancient Rome, in fact provided the foundation on which the statecraft of the Byzantine Empire and its strategy were based. What can be observed in the source material is that part of the Byzantine state policies which related to the internal security of the provinces and its population, as well as to the foreign policy towards the neighbouring states, nations and tribes, share great similarities with the Roman policies and grand strategy (the overall state-level strategy), the beginnings of which are from the time of the Principate and Octavian Augustus, as well as from the late Roman period, with the emergence of the Tetrarchy and the reign of Emperor Diocletian.[570]

568 Murray and Grimsley, "Introduction: On strategy", 12.

569 Macgregor Knox, "Conclusion: Continuity and revolution in the making of strategy", in *The Making of a strategy. Rulers, States and War*, ed. Williamson Murray et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 615.

570 Dragan Gjalevski, "On Byzantine Statecraft, Grand Strategy and diplomacy in the imperial centuries. Indications of Roman political heritage", in *Proceedings of the 10th International Symposium on Byzantine and Medi-*

Byzantine Foreign Policy: State Interests and Ends

Through the activities of its government each state (both internally and externally towards other political entities), actually either tries to position itself in the world as best as possible and in that way achieve its political interests and ends, thus ensuring longevity, or to hold as long as possible to an already established position in the international relations. The Byzantine Empire was no exception to this rule. What is evidently noted in the sources is that throughout the centuries-old history of the Byzantine Empire, the main objective and challenge of its government was to establish political relations with its neighbours through which it would embody and maintain its imperial status, thus confirming its position as a world power, which it acquired as a medieval continuation of the ancient Roman Empire.

The political beliefs that the Byzantines established about their own Roman heritage and their role as the one true Empire in the world, were constantly emphasized and politically defended by imperial embassies when send abroad, or by the imperial government when foreign envoys were on diplomatic missions in Constantinople. They were an integral part of the agenda of every emperor and it was a duty that accompanied the position itself. Naming the Byzantine capital as New Rome (Νέα Ῥώμη),[571] the Byzantine disagreement to Charlemagne's acclamation as emperor by the Pope and reffering to this act as a kind of novelty,[572] as well as Romanos I Lekapenos clear disapproval to the use of the term "Roman" in the imperial title of the Bulgarian ruler Simeon, where he reports that "...we did not write that [you] should not be called emperor at all, but because you term yourself as emperor of the Romans...",[573] are just a few such examples. The verbal dispute over the prerogatives of Byzantine imperial reign recorded by Liudprand of Cremona during his second diplomatic mission to Constantinople, are more than a clear indication of this tendency.[574] Identical political aspirations can be seen in the 14th century, where a letter sent by the patriarch of Constantinople to the prince of Grand Duchy of Moscow notes that the Byzantine emperor had been left out in the prayers of the Russian Church.[575]

eval Studies "Days of Justinian I: Heritage", Skopje, 10-13 November, 2022, ed. Mitko B. Panov (Skopje: Institute of National History, 2023): 92-110. For more details on the Roman grand strategy, see Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, passim.; Fergus Millar, "Emperors, Frontiers and Foreign relations, 31 B.C. to 378 A.D.", *Britannia* 13 (1982): 1-23.

571 Telemachos Lounghis, "Le Systèmes d'alliances diplomatiques byzantins successifs de 476 à 1204", in *Ambassadeurs et ambassades au cœur des relations diplomatiques, Rome-Occident medieval-Byzance (VIIe s. avant J.-C.-XIIe s. après J.-C.)*, ed. Audrey Becker et Nicolas Drocourt (Metz: Universite de Lorraine, 2012), 304.

572 Nicol, "Byzantine political thought", 58, 62.

573 Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 5.20-32, 6.69-70.

574 *Liudprand*, 270.

575 Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 264.; Nicol, "Byzantine political thought", 72-73.

The emphasis on the Roman heritage by adding the term "of the Romans" (βασιλεύς τῶν Ῥωμαίων) on the title of the Byzantine emperor,[576] and the frequent indication that many Christian states were founded on territory which was previously under Byzantine i.e., Roman authority, further confirms this fact.[577]

Hence, an assumption can be made that the primary task of the Byzantine foreign policy was to maintain the imperial status, especially from the 7th century onwards, in the political contacts and relations with other states, nations and tribes, and present it as an uninterrupted continuity the beginnings of which can be dated back to the reign of Constantine the Great or even to the first Roman emperors. If preservation of the Roman imperial status and legacy, as well as its positioning as the first sovereign among Christian rulers,[578] was of primary importance for Byzantine foreign policy, then according to the established imperial propaganda, we can assume that the secondary task was to maintain the prerogatives of the emperor as ἰσαπόστολος, guardian of Christians and the one true faith.[579] The Byzantine emperor was actually chosen by God to take care of the baptism of the entire population in the Roman state, and to spread the Word throughout the known world.[580] This Byzantine perception of the apostolic role of the emperor is clearly visible in the policies of certain Byzantine emperors, especially that of Justinian I[581] or Michael III,[582] but also in the imperial biographies, for instance in the *Life* of Basileios I,[583] or in the *Life* of the All-Slavic Christian saint Constantine Philosopher. In order to maintain these prerogatives the Byzantines often send envoys - priests to the Arabs and the Khazars, with the task not only to respond to the criticisms by other religions,[584] but above all to maintain abroad the Byzantine image of the emperor in Constantinople as a

[576] Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 91-92.

[577] According to *DAI*, 31.26-30, 31.58-60, 32.21-29, the land in which the Croats and Serbs "...settled themselves was originally under the dominion of the emperor of the Romans".

[578] Donald M. Nicol, "The Byzantine Views of Western Europe", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 8, no.4 (1967): 316, 321.

[579] This image of the apostolic role of the emperor is observed not only in imperial biographies, such as the life of Basileios I, but also in the activities of Emperor Michael III presented in the life of the Christian Pan-Slavic saint Constantine - Cyril Philosopher who, according to *Panonski legendi, prev*. Radmila Ugrinova-Skalovska (Skopje: Misla, 1969), 36-51, was sent on a mission to the Khazars.

[580] Shepard, "Spreading the Word", 230-231.

[581] For more details on the state missions in the time of Justinian I see Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 307-311.

[582] Gyula Moravcsik, "Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars in the Period of their Migration", *The American Slavic and East European Review* 5, no.3-4 (1946): 34-39.

[583] According to *Vita Basilii Imperatoris*, 95.1-5, "...the emperor did not show careless or indifferent to this apostolic work".

[584] *Theophanus Continuatus*, 95.19-99.; Skylitzes, 58-60. The author of *Panonski legendi*, 32-36, reports that Constantine-Cyril was sent on one such mission. For the real purpose of this mission see Paul Magdalino, "The Road to Baghdad", in *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?*, ed. Leslie Brubaker (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 203.

sole guardian of the Christians.[585] This aspect of foreign policy had a significant influence in maintaining the imperial status represented through the central missionary activity,[586] since according to the Byzantine ideology, after a person accepted Christianity he established a certain relationship with the Byzantine emperor, which was not only of a spiritual, but also of an ideological and political nature. Since he was continuously depicted as God's representative on Earth, guardian of the church and supreme leader of the entire Christian world, according to the Byzantine ideology those who were baptized and accepted the spiritual authority of the Church at the same time recognized the authority of the emperor, thus becoming, through this process, his subjects from an ideological point of view.

The reintegration of former imperial territories, termed as *Orbis Romanus*, was also an integral part of the foreign affairs of the Byzantine government. Despite the fact that the sources state that it was an indispensable obligation, an example of which is the statement of Photios in the preface of the *Epanagoge*,[587] nevertheless what is noticeable from these same sources is that this state affair was in the domain of short-term policies since its appearance was mainly a result of the personal initiative of the Byzantine emperor who ruled at that exact moment, the available resources, as well as the current political conditions in the regions where the imperial government had it interests. Such examples are the military campaigns undertaken in order to reintegrate the islands of Crete[588] and Sic-

585 Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 315, 320.; Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 99, as well as Shepard, "Spreading the word", 231-239.

586 For the diplomatic aspects of the Byzantine missionary work, see Gjalevski, "Diplomatskite aspekti", 66-81.; Sergey A. Ivanov, "'With the Emperors Help': An Open-handed Mission and Byzantine Diplomacy", in *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20th-30th November 2013*, ed. Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos (Thessaloniki, 2015), 78.; Dimitry Obolensky, "The Principles and Methods of Byzantine Diplomacy", in *Byzantium and the Slavs* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994), 14.; Ihor Ševčenko, "Religious Missions Seen from Byzantium", in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies XII/XIII. Proceedings of the International Congress Commemorating the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine*, eds. Omeljan Pritsak and Ihor Ševčenko (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1988/1989), 8.; Marius Telea, "Mission and/or conversion: Strategies of Byzantine diplomacy", *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 6, no.3 (2015): 89, 95.

587 In regards to the duties of the emperor, Photios in the section of Epanagoga (or Eisagoga) titled as "Concerning the Basileus" in *Collectio Librorum Juris Graeco-Romani Ineditorum: Ecloga Leonis Et Constantini, Epanagoge Basilii Leonis Et Alexandri*, ed. Carolus Eduardus Zachariae a Lingenthal (Lipsiae: Sumtibus J. A. Barthii, 1852), 66, states that the "...aim of the emperor is to guard and secure through his virtue the things which he already possesses; to recover and maintain through sleepless care the things lost; and to acquire, by wisdom and through just victories, the things absent". For the reintegration of former imperial territories as a responsibility of the Byzantine government, see Evangelos Chrysos, "Byzantium between East and West: Opponents and Allies", in *Heaven and Earth, Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections*, ed. Anastasia Drandaki, Demetra Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Anastasia Tourta (Athens, 2013), 282-283.; Angeliki E. Laiou, "On Just War in Byzantium", in *Byzantium and the Other: Relations and Exchanges*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou, Cécile Morrisson, Rowan Dorin (London: Routledge, 2012), 156-159, 163-164.; Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique*, 42-43.

588 In regard to Michael II's attempts to reintegrate the island of Crete see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 45-47, or for

ily under the Byzantine rule.[589] Another example that the Byzantine government basically perceived all territories previously reigned by the Roman Empire as its own, such as the Balkans or the Pannonian plane, which were only temporarily separated from the authority of the emperor due to some unfortunate events, is the statement in *De Administrando Imperio* in regards to Pannonia, the new home of the Magyars. Although Pannonia had been beyond the reach of Byzantine authority for several centuries, nevertheless, the Byzantine envoy Gabriel conveyed to his Magyar hosts that "...the emperor declares that you are [to] go and expel the Pechenegs from their place and settle yourselves there (for in former days you used to be settled there yourselves)".[590] The author presents a very similar information when he reports on the current situation in the Balkan Peninsula, pointing out and clearly emphasizing that in the past the entire region that stretched from the Adriatic Sea to the Danube River was under the rule of the Byzantines.[591]

However, this Byzantine policy of reintegration underwent certain changes over time. If during the reign of Justinian I and his successors the idea was to reconquer all western territories that had once been under the rule by Rome, policy named with the term *unlimited ecumenicity*,[592] after the turbulent 7th and 8th eighth centuries, as well as during the process of *renovatio* which began in the second half of the 9th century, the objective of this policy was replaced by another one, a limited territorial sphere of expansion, termed as *limited ecumenicity*,[593] which referred to the control, whether direct or indirect, of the Balkans, Armenia and Syria, as well as of Southern Italy with Sicily. One of the rea-

the campaign of Leon VI in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 651-660.

589 For the Byzantine policy of reintegration of Sicily during the reign of Michael III and Basileios I see Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes, Tome I*, 221.; Alexander A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes, Tome II: Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l'époque de la dynastie macédonienne (les empereurs Basile I, Léon le Sage et Constantin VII Porphyrogénète) 867-959 (253-348). Première partie: Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l'époque de la dynastie macédonienne. Première période, de 867 à 959, ed. Henri Grégoire, Marius Canard* (Bruxelles: Fondation Byzantine, 1968), 21-22. About the unsuccessful campaign of Nikephoros II Phokas see *Leo the Deacon*, 115-117.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 256.

590 *DAI*, 8.25-27. The reason for such rhetoric, which did not exist before the Magyar migration to the Pannonian plain, should be sought in the political interests which the Byzantine Empire seems to have had towards the new home of the Magyars. The reason should be sought in the historical past of this territory. Pannonia used to be an integral part of the Roman Empire. As its medieval continuity, the Byzantine Empire believed that the area conquered by the Magyar tribes naturally belonged in its sphere of influence. This historical right to a certain territory was based on the idea of a single Roman Empire, a political ideology according to which it considered as its own, as *pars occidentalis*, all the lands which had previously been part of it, but were now under the governance of other "barbarian" rulers which, solely due to God's will, were temporarily outside its direct control. These *de facto* independent states were actually perceived by the Byzantine governments as temporary political entities whose rulers governed them through previously obtained permission, presented as a kind of gift and mercy from the emperor in Constantinople.

591 *DAI*, 29.14-16, 30.6-12.

592 Lampakis, *Byzantine diplomacy*, 46-48.

593 Ibid, 48-50.

sons for this change in policy should be sought in the situation which existed during this period of turmoil, when numerous states were established and consolidated in Western Europe. The second reason was in the possible consequences that appeared as a result of some diplomatic steps which are supposed to have been conducted by foreign political or ecclesiastical entities e.g., the Roman papacy, whereas certain division of spheres of influence was established.[594] The last reason, it seems, was of a pragmatic nature and was the result of the current opportunities in the state in terms of resources, both human and financial, that could be set aside for achieving this objective and the current needs of the Byzantine foreign policy, which shifted toward strengthening the border security during the Macedonian dynasty, through establishing buffer zones with allied client states and to maintain the imperial status in international relations. The existence of these two different concepts of the Byzantine policy of reintegration, which were also in some kind of mutual opposition and conflict, as was the case during the second half of the 10th century, can be best observed in the statements of Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas.[595]

Regardless of the fact that it was more concerned with the internal security of the state, nevertheless, the Byzantine policy of acquiring allies, the long-term use of the "defence in depth" strategy (presented by a permeable border with a "no man's land" and a static solid defence - fortresses and fortified settlements throughout the provinces that were targets of the enemy's attacks, the establishment of military regions - *strategides* from the middle of the 7th century, and the formation of the military system of *themata* in the beginning of the 9th century)[596] and its gradual reform, is just another example that the members of government in relation to the art of statecraft, long-term policy and planning within a military and strategic context possessed some appropriate knowledge.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that all these previously stated political interests and ends, as well as the strategy through which they could be achieved, were not, in fact immutable. What can be observed from the sources is that over time some of these, for instance the long-term strategy of the state, were partly modified and adapted primarily to the new political conditions and circumstances in the world (within the regions where the emperor had a political interest) in accordance to the actual power of the Byzantine Empire at that time and to the military and political might of the opponents. And sec-

[594] Ibid, 49.

[595] Ibid, 50-54.

[596] About the "no man's land" and "defence in depth" strategy see Dennis F. Sullivan, "Byzantine fronts and Strategies c.300-1204", in *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War*, ed. Yannis Stouraitis (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 275, 277, 279, 290-291, and John F. Haldon, *Byzantium at War A.D. 600-1453* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 39. For *strategides* and *themata* Leslie Brubaker and John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the iconoclast era c.650-850: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 723-771.

ondly, to the personal inclinations and priorities of the reigning emperors.[597]

In regard to the Byzantine foreign policy in the Balkan region, which was part of Christian Europe and therefore part of the ancient *Orbis Romanus*, the main political interest was to maintain the ideological and political prestige of the emperor as a direct successor of the Roman emperors and as the first sovereign among European Christian rulers. Although Bulgaria and the Slavic principalities were not members of this Christian club of states until the middle of the 9th century, this situation soon changed. Despite this, the Byzantine diplomacy in the Balkan Peninsula distinguished two distinct areas of interest and activity that were shaped by the scale of the political and military threat. The first area of interest was Bulgaria, while the second were the Slavic principalities on the Adriatic Sea: Croatia, Serbia, Diocleia, Zachlumia and Terbounia. The events from the middle of the 9th until the middle of the 10th century indicate that the diplomatic and military activities of the Byzantine government were mostly aimed at pacification of these two micro-regions in the Balkans through imposition of Byzantine hegemony and maintaining the existing political situation.

The Byzantine priority was mainly directed towards the Bulgarian threat due to the great military power which this state possessed, but also as a result of its proximity to Constantinople. It was of the utmost interest for the Byzantine government to have a pacified and obedient neighbour on the Thracian border, and if that was not possible, it had to be subjugated. Hence, the policy towards Bulgaria had to achieve several objectives. The main goal was imposing political hegemony and the prerogatives of the emperor as first sovereign among the rulers, which was to be achieved through the process of Christianization[598] and the establishment of relations of political kinship based on conferral of imperial titles (the Bulgarian rulers are named as spiritual brother, or as son of the Byzantine emperor), a policy noted in *The Book of Ceremonies*.[599] The defence of the Roman imperial heritage which was threatened by the political interests of the Bulgarian *knyaz* Simeon was another objective that emerged during this period. Neutralization of the Bulgarian attempts for supremacy in the Balkans through direct military interventions e.g., the campaign of 971 deployed on the initiative of Ioannes I Tzimiskes was a main Byzantine interest, an undertaking which, according to the statement of Leo the

[597] Murray, "Thoughts", 2-3.; Murray and Grimsley, "Introduction: On strategy", 1, 20.; Evangelos Chrysos, "Byzantine diplomacy A.D. 300-800: means and ends", *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992), 26.

[598] Bulgarians were often a target for baptism. See Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 83-92.; Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 318-320.; Shepard, "Spreading the word", 233-234.

[599] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 690.

Deacon, was not planned[600] but resulted in conquest of the Bulgarian state and its transformation into a Byzantine province.[601]

During this period the main interest of the Byzantine diplomacy towards the Slavic principalities from the Balkans' western regions was to impose political hegemony and to establish relations of political kinship, but unlike the Bulgarian example, with a greater political disparity. The motive behind this shift in the Byzantine politics should be sought in the size and power of the polities from this part of the Balkans. In that context, they were not similar to Bulgaria, let alone as some other larger European states which were far more powerful, both militarily and financially. Another objective of the Byzantine diplomacy in this region of the Balkan Peninsula was the acquisition of the Slavic principalities as allies and their establishment as border client states of the emperor in Constantinople. In terms of the conducted military activities, apart from that of the *patrikios* Niketas Ooryphas in the time of Basileios I, there was no other direct intervention of the imperial army or any initiative to reintegrate these principalities under the authority of the Byzantine emperor by military means, due to the fact that they did not pose a direct threat to Constantinople, but only to the imperial provinces on the Adriatic coast.[602]

The formation of Samuil's State in the Balkans after the subjugation of Bulgaria was considered as an act of rebellion (ἀποστασία) by the Byzantine government. This political justification empowered the Byzantine emperor Basileios II before his own subjects, as well as before the foreigners, to re-establish the order (τάξις) which was created in 971 after the integration of Bulgaria within the borders of the Byzantine Empire, with the help of all possible means, including military ones.[603] Hence, in relation to Samuil and his state, Basileios II began his activities through a policy of imposing hegemony and the prerogatives of the emperor as a supreme ruler, for the reason that at the start of his reign, he waged two civil wars. However, after the failure of this policy, he shifted on to the simultaneous implementation of military forces and diplomatic measures which,

600 According to *Leo the Deacon*, 177-178, "...but to the commanders and taxiarchs at any rate these words [spoken by the emperor for an offensive campaign] seemed to be ill-timed recklessness and purposeless rashness verging on senseless insanity, to recommend thoughtlessly that the Roman forces proceed into foreign territory by a precipitous path full of cavernous hiding places".

601 After the victory over the Rus in 971 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 294, reports that Ioannes I Tzimiskes decided to annex and incorporate Bulgaria into the Byzantine Empire. This act was symbolically performed through removal of the imperial symbols from the Bulgarian emperor Boris II and their placement in the cathedral church of Saint Sophia during the triumphal ceremony.

602 Dragan Gjalevski, "An Outline of Byzantine Diplomacy in the Eastern Adriatic Region (c.867-1000)", *Journal of History* 55, no.1 (2020): 30-31.

603 Dragan Gjalevski, "Byzantine Just War and Imperial interests in the Balkans during the Tenth century", *Journal of History* 49, no.1 (2014): 130.

after several decades of conflict and despite several failures, led to a complete reintegration of the entire Balkan Peninsula under Byzantine authority.[604]

Unlike the Balkan Peninsula, the Byzantine diplomacy towards the Pontic steppe, from a military and political aspect, was purely defensive. The Byzantine emperor had no ambition to impose political hegemony or to rule over the Scythian wilderness, which was never an integral part of the former *Orbis Romanus* i.e., of the civilized world. In fact, if we look at the measures which were taken, it can be noted that the aim of the Byzantine policy towards the steppe and the regions beyond, was to pacify the states, nations and tribes who were located and lived in these areas, to establish closer friendly and allied relations with them and to bring them into the Byzantine political and cultural orbit. Certain level of military and political balance of power, a state of equilibrium, had to be maintained, which in turn would allow better security for both Constantinople and the Byzantine provinces in the Balkans, not only from the enemies who lived on the peninsula, but also from the possible raids by the tribes and states who at this time lived and were located in the region north of the Black Sea: the Magyars, Pechenegs and Rus.

[604] Gjalevski, "Byzantine politics", 69-75.

Statecraft and the concept of Grand Strategy

"Strategy teaches us how to defend what is our own and to threaten what belongs to the enemy. The defensive is the means by which one acts to guard his own people and their property, the offensive is the means by which one retaliates against his opponents"

On *Strategy*, 5.2-5

In order to ensure their own survival, to maintain the prosperity or to pursue political and military interests and goals, states establish certain concept that encompasses set of ideas, plans, methods, techniques and skills, with intention to achieve these ends. The term which denotes this activity, known as strategy (στρατηγία), derives from the Hellenic words στρατός-army and στρατηγός-strategist which means art or wisdom of warfare and implies to the skills of long-term deployment of all available resources and assets of a state to achieve its military or political objectives. This popular meaning of the term strategy first appeared in the 19th century and it was not known to the Byzantines since their political and military elite did not separate it from military tactics as clearly as we do today. In fact, the Byzantine military manuals treat these two terms as inseparable parts of the same theory of warfare.[605] In the preface of *Taktika*, the following is indicated: "Tactics is the science of movement in warfare. Strategy is how good commanders put their military training into practice, their drilling with stratagems, and putting together ways of defeating the enemy. The aim of tactics is to defeat the enemy by all possible means of assaults and actions".[606] There are two types of strategies which can be distinguished today: in literal sense of the word – which deals with the detailed planning of a specific military campaign, and in a general meaning - one that covers political and military ends of a state and the process of their achievement, known today under the term state, national or grand strategy,[607]

[605] *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium Vol. 3*, 1964. See also Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 34.; Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 412-43.

[606] *Taktika*, I.1, 3-4.

[607] Lissner, "What is Grand Strategy?", 56.; Holmes and Rofe, *Global Diplomacy*, 4, 19. Among the extensive literature see *The Shaping of Grand Strategy. Policy, diplomacy and war*, ed. Williamson Murray, Richard Hurt

a feature of statecraft.[608]

Determining the need to create and establish strategies, or one comprehensive strategy, by the ruling elite in order to secure the political ends of a state is, in principle, a process that is inevitable for a political entity. In all of its infinite variety, relative to other type of strategies the state-level strategy (known today with the term grand strategy) can be compared by the extent to which it relies on costly "military" force versus exploiting the potential "non-military" force represented through diplomacy ("armed persuasion"), inducements (subsidies, gifts and honours), alongside with deception and propaganda. Today, the prevailing opinion in historiography, accepted by part of the scholars, is that "all states have a grand strategy, whether they know it or not". Furthermore, it is also pointed out that "all states must have a grand strategy, but not all strategies are equal".[609] Nevertheless, even though it is a hallmark of statecraft and derives from it, in relation to this state-level strategy the term used by scholars in their debates is "grand strategy", not "statecraft strategy".

The idea of "grand strategy" is, actually, a relatively modern phenomenon. First appearance of this notion in relation to the existence of a state-level strategy is noted during the 18th century in the European military analyses, and its evolution from an exclusively military character to a concept that also includes political ends, began immediately after the end of the First World War,[610] while the popularity of the term grand strategy increased when the Cold War ended.[611] Although, terminologically speaking, this concept explains the modern trends of state-level strategy, nevertheless, it is emphasizing the fact that in the past certain states, due to their size, longevity and capability, could, within certain frameworks, develop their own grand strategy, such as the Byzantine Empire, or its predecessor the Roman Empire, which were essentially an exception to the rule. Furthermore, it is indicated that in the past, as today, the grand strategy included military measures, diplomatic strategies, but also everything that was related to the achievement of one or another specific goal,[612] formed as a result of the art of statecraft and its specificities. And just like statecraft, grand strategy is shaped and exists in a political environment of constant change, of perpetual flux, where unpredictability and the unexpected are its inherent factors.[613]

Sinnreich, James Lacey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).; Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy. A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

608 Kaplan, "An Introduction", 548.; Paul M. Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven: Yale, 1991), 5-6.

609 For more details see Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 409-415.

610 Lissner, "What is Grand Strategy?", 56.

611 Silove, "Beyond the Byzzword", 27.

612 Murray, "Thoughts", 2-3.

613 Ibid, 5.

What currently preoccupies scholars to a significant extent, and is also related to grand strategy, is the development and determination of a theory for its concept. Is the existence of this strategy intentional? Which states may have a strategy of this type? And to what extent it is permanent or flexible?[614] In regards to the concept of grand strategy, several different views have been crystallized by scholars today,[615] of which only a few will be singled out.[616] One of these presents this strategy as a type of plan (grand plan), similar to military strategy or modern doctrines and planning.[617] Another conceptualization of the grand strategy is the one where it is observed as an organizing principle, or as a set of principles (grand principles), and it is presented as a type of framework, a comprehensive guide, a basic strategic view, but also as a comprehensive foreign policy doctrine, a set of ideas and plans, etc.[618] The next view regarding the concept of grand strategy is its perception as a pattern of behaviour (grand behaviour) which does not indicate an existence of any plan or organizing principle and where the pattern, which was established unwittingly by those who created it, is itself, in fact, the grand strategy.[619] This latter view of how a grand strategy can be shaped is clearly presented in the academic world through the existing literature, and one of these monographs deals with the Byzantine Empire. However, it should be noted that in practice, it's not that easy to differentiate these three different categories, since they are intertwined.[620]

In order for a state to be able to establish certain grand strategy, it is necessary to determine beforehand the political interests and ends that should be achieved, as well as the means which will be used.[621] In that context, can the interests and objectives of the Byzantine government discussed in the previous chapter e.g., the maintaining of the Roman imperial status and the prerogatives of the emperor as a sole guardian of Christians and the one true faith, as well as the reintegration of lost imperial territories or taking care of the security of the state through an establishment of various military and administrative solutions, be formulated and presented as valid ends of a comprehensive state-level strategy? To the scholars who research the grand strategy, these interests and

614 Silove, "Beyond the Byzzword", 28-29.

615 Some of them are named as "grand strategy as a variable", as "process" and as "blueprint". According to the opinion of Lissner, "What is Grand Strategy?", 57-67, the first theory attempts to explain the genesis of grand strategy and its change over time. The second sees the strategic planning process as the essence of grand strategy, while the latter theory presents prescriptive and determinative broad visions of grand strategy.

616 Silove, "Beyond the Byzzword", 30-34.

617 Ibid, 31-39.

618 Ibid, 39-42.

619 Ibid, 43-45.

620 Lissner, "What is Grand Strategy?", 57.

621 According to Silove, "Beyond the Byzzword", 45, all three concepts of the grand strategy contain these two elements.

ends, which are of a long-term nature, represent a distinctive prerequisite for its existence.[622] However, according to the existing scientific thoughts, in order for specific interests and ends, be they military or political, to be qualified under this term, these should be achieved through long-term state planning, which also includes efficient organization and utilization of the resources carried out with the help of a previously formed strategic concept consisting of military and political principles, methods and means established specifically for that purpose. From this point of view, the sources indicate that none of the Byzantine emperors undertook such extensive fiscal or military policies during their reign, which would direct their successors over a longer period to use the resources to literally follow and achieve some previously determined interests and ends. The overall assumption is that Justinian I's restoration of the Roman Empire, or the conducted "reconquista" of the Macedonian dynasty during the 10th and 11th century, were not done through some previous extensive and long-term planning, but were rather carried out on a personal initiative, with intensive monitoring of the immediate political environment and by taking immediate short-term military and political actions.[623] Specifically, the only safe conclusion is that the Byzantines had unwittingly established a sort of an "operational code" of action,[624] their *modus operandi*, a conclusion that is deduced from the military, as well as from the diplomatic pattern of behaviour which are attested in the sources,[625] and according to which the basic principle of the Byzantine grand strategy was the "avoidance of war".[626]

622 Silove, "Beyond the Byzzword", 46-47.

623 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 11.; Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 34-46. According to Kaegi, "Some thoughts", 14-15, "...several distinctive features of strategy in the modern world are absent from Byzantine strategic texts and from Byzantine historians' description of strategy and tactics...In part, because of the slowness of communications and other logistical difficulties, the military texts and narratives do not justify any effort to impute a "grand strategy," or rigorous comprehensive or total strategy for all frontiers of the empire...The closest approach to any grand strategy would be the broader world view of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos in his *De Administrando Imperio*, in which there is an interlocking diplomatic and military perspective."

624 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 409-420.

625 For the military repetitive behaviour compare, among others, the military manuals *Strategikon*, *Taktika*, "On Strategy" and "Campaign organization and tactics". The diplomatic repetitive behaviour will be analysed in the chapter on Byzantine diplomacy.

626 Warren Treadgold, "Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior", in *Noble Ideas and Bloody Realities. Warfare in the Middle Ages*, ed. Niall Christie and Maya Yazigi (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 213-216.; Murray, "Thoughts", 6. There are numerous papers which focus on the Byzantine attitudes to warfare. See Yannis Stouraitis, "State War Ethic and Popular Views on Warfare", in *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300-1204*, ed. Yannis Stouraitis (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 59-91. Also, Haldon, "Blood and Ink'", 281–295; Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*. 13-33.; Yannis Stouraitis, *Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (7.–11. Jahrhundert)* (Wien: Verlag Fassbaender, 2009), 219-231.; Johannes Koder and Ioannis Stouraitis, "Byzantine Approaches to Warfare (6th – 12th centuries). An Introduction", in *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion. Akten des Internationalen Symposiums (Wien, 19.–21. Mai 2011)*, ed. Johanes Koder and Ioannis Stouraitis (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012), 9-16.

This continuous implementation of the same military methods and diplomatic means throughout the centuries, a fact which will be discussed in more details in one of the following chapters, was basically a consequence of the level of success they had, as well as of the factors that led to the formation of this "operational code", which was established and existed as a result of some previously gathered knowledge regarding the state-level strategic planning aimed at the resolving of conflicts not only of a military, but also of a political nature. The policy identical to the one of the late Roman Empire regarding the pacification of the steppe peoples,[627] the existence of different foreign policy depending on the region i.e., the making of a political and military distinction between Christian Europe, the Balkan Peninsula, the Pontic steppe, Central Asia,[628] Transcaucasia, Sasanian Empire and later the Islamic world, as well as the different approach in resolving of conflicts or imposing of the Byzantine political hegemony across these same regions, is evidence in that direction.[629]

Nevertheless, it should be noted that a strategy does not represent an enunciated set of goals and principles that statemen adhere in consistent fashion. It is more of an idiosyncratic process, influenced by various internal and external factors, then a specific, clearly thought-through, approach.[630] As the world and the international system change, so does the strategy which one state forms in order to successfully survive in it needs to change, or rather to adapt.[631] But, to expect long-term planning and allocation of resources for one sole specific political goal, or set of interests and ends, from a medieval state the basic income of which is largely derived from agricultural production and was extremely vulnerable to human and natural disasters (while most of the budget was intended to maintain the army), and where waging only one battle represented a huge financial burden for the state treasury, while on the other hand this same state did not perceive strategy according to its modern meaning, is false and illogical. In that context, in regard to what needs to be implemented to achieve national political interests, it is highly probable that the present-day methodology is not fully applicable in confirming whether or not a long-term strategic planning, an overall strategy portrayed through a "state-level" or a "grand" strategy, as we understand it today, existed in the Middle Ages.

627 See footnote 465.

628 For the Byzantine foreign policy in this region during the 6th and 7th centuries see Mark Whittow, "Byzantium's Eurasian policy in the age of the Türk empire", in *Empires and exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca.250-750*, ed. Nicola di Cosmo and Michael Mass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 271-286.; Li Qiang and Stefanos Kordosis, "The Geopolitics of the Silk Road: Resurveying the Relationship of the Western Türks with Byzantium through Their Diplomatic Communications", *Medieval Worlds* 8 (2018): 109-125.

629 Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 234, and Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy", 3-4.

630 Murray, "Thoughts", 8-9.

631 Lissner, "What is Grand Strategy?", 58.

In fact, it would be incorrect to convey today's understanding of strategy, the various modern factors that define it along with its techniques and means of implementation, and at the same time determine its existence in a society the level of knowledge and perception of which, according to the sources, did not clearly differentiate strategy from military tactics.[632] The Byzantines were not even familiar with the term diplomacy in the modern sense of the word.[633] The present day approach in conducting diplomatic relations was unknown to the medieval states, but that does not prevent us to speak about the existence of Byzantine diplomacy. This difference between modern and medieval diplomacy is clearly stated in the response of the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz to the Byzantine envoy sent by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, who requested that a permanent contact be established between the states through regular ambassadorial missions.[634] It is also necessary to take into account the possibility that the medieval people's perception about their own environment and their needs, and thus their *modus operandi* to solve problems or accomplish certain ideas, is different from ours, due to the gap that exists not only in knowledge, but also in the level of technological development. Furthermore, another problem was the process of gathering relevant information which was of great importance for achieving or maintaining the political interests and ends, and was essential for the Byzantine government to be able to monitor the political and military situation in the neighbouring countries and if needed to respond appropriately and in a timely manner.[635] Basically, the transmission of information from the border regions to Constantinople, but also in the opposite direction, could last from several days to few weeks, depending on the distance to the Byzantine capital, as well as the type of transport that was used i.e., whether it took by land or by sea.[636] It was this relative slowness of communications in relation to the present situation that determined how fast the Byzantines could detect or respond to a political or military threat,[637] or to apply certain measures in

632 *Taktika*, I.7-10.; On Strategy, 5.2-5.

633 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 95-96.

634 Stern, "An embassy", 247-248.

635 Shepard, "Imperial Information and Ignorance", 112-116.

636 According to *DAI*, 42.15-18, the road from Thessalonica to the city of Belgrade on the Danube River took 8 days, if the traveller was not in a hurry. A day's journey by sea was equal to a week's journey by land. For land and sea communications see Anna Avramea, "Land and Sea Communications, Fourth-Fifteenth Centuries", in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 57-88.

637 One such example is the Russian attack of 860 or that of 941 noted by *Liudprand of Cremona*, 179-180.; For the speed with which the Byzantines gathered information and responded militarily to an external military threat, see John F. Haldon, "Information and War: Some Comments on Defensive Strategy and Information in the Middle Byzantine Period (ca. A.D. 660-1025)", in *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, ed. Alexander Sarantis and Neil Christie (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 373-390.

a region or state, in order to impose or maintain the interests they had. In fact, the present day procedures and methods which shape and plan the strategy and the ultimate ends of statecraft, as well as the ability for more rapid response to the everchanging political situation, are more of a modern invention, or more precisely, a result of the technological development of the society and the overall knowledge acquired over time. This methodological discrepancy is unequivocally noted on the pages of *De Administrando Imperio*. Yet despite all of this, the information presented in this source clearly indicates the fact that the Byzantines, after all, acquired and possessed some basic knowledge for state-level strategic planning.[638]

The Byzantine bureaucracy is clear evidence for this obvious discrepancy of knowledge between the modern and the medieval society. Although the Byzantine Empire's bureaucracy was one of the most efficient ones in the Middle Ages, its level of development and sophistication was far from the administrative structure of the present day offices and departments which are staffed with employees capable for long-term state level planning and issuing of documents containing information important for the creation of a "national strategy", and can define the "state interests" in the modern sense of the word.[639] Nevertheless, the level of competence of the Byzantine bureaucracy, the experience of which was collected over the centuries and the knowledge inherited from the Roman Empire, was significantly higher comparing to other polities at the time. It possessed the ability to gather valuable intelligence data and other information through the Bureau of Barbarians (scrinium barbarorum) and the logothetes tou dromou (λογοθέτης τοῦ δρόμου), and to efficiently allocate the resources necessary to the Byzantine emperor and his senior officials (the closest associates) to shape a new, or modify an already existing, concept of ideas and plans of operation (political and/or military measures), as a result of change in the regions where they had political interests.[640] The numerous domestic policies which were carried out with great success in the military, administrative, judiciary, economic and financial sphere are clear example of competence of the Byzantine bureaucracy.

Another issue is the sources' scarcity of information regarding the existence of a concept which could be named with the term's statecraft or grand strategy, as well as the Byzantine government's inconsistency in the management of political and military affairs of the state. However, this does not mean an absence of any strategy. Actually,

638 *DAI*, prooimion.9-10. See also Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 108-111, and Shepard, "Imperial Information and Ignorance", 107.

639 Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 35.

640 Francis Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 174-175, 183. For scrinium barbarorum and λογοθέτου τοῦ δρόμου see Miller, *Studies*, 2-18.

the creation and writing of strategic plans and doctrines is a modern invention. Hence, most of the information which could indicate the existence of some kind of a process for establishing a state-level strategy was probably not recorded, or if something was recorded in a similar format, it was lost between the lines of the historical sources.[641] And the inconsistency does not indicate a lack of it, but rather a shift in the state's priorities as a result of an external factor, or a new approach, specific for a certain imperial government in its attempt to achieve and maintain the Byzantine political interests and ends. In fact, the solutions implemented by one state are mainly directed to resolve a current political or military issue, but intended to be applicable as long as possible in regards to improving both foreign and domestic affairs. In the case of the Byzantine Empire, one such example is the establishment of the military districts and later of the *themata*. The change that occured at the beginning of the 9th century with the addition of the term τῶν Ῥωμαίων to the title βασιλεύς, as a response to Charlemagne's acclamation as emperor by the Pope, represents an adaptation in the imperial strategy, a creation of new approach in the foreign policy aimed at maintaining of one already established political end, in this case – the Byzantine imperial status and its Roman heritage. While, its practical implementation in the centuries which followed, as during the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas,[642] on the other hand, is evidence of the continuity in the Byzantine statecraft and an indication of a long-term strategy to which several imperial governments adhered to. The frequent shift between the two aspects of the Byzantine "carrot and stick" policy towards the political entities in Southern Italy and Transcaucasia, is yet another example.[643] The same change in the foreign policy, as well as in the strategy, can be also observed during the reign of the Komnenos dynasty which, in an attempt to maintain the imperial interests, altered its attitude and policy towards Western Europe after the difficult period of the late 1080s and early 1090s, when the Byzantines were left without resources and with a total dissolution of their state in Asia Minor.[644] These are only few examples of how a great state possesses the ability to adjust to reality when its policy (i.e., resources and interests) is set out of balance and overstreched, taking a different political and/or military approach and shifting the focus to those aspects which could help the polity.[645]

Actually, the process of forming a state-level strategy i.e., a grand strategy, is inevitable due to the fact that it is an evolutionary step towards the political self-awareness

641 Murray, "Thoughts", 3.
642 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 270.
643 For South Italy and Transcaucasia in the 10th century see Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 151-202.
644 Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 56-57.
645 Murray, "Thoughts", 2.

(level of consciousness) of the ruling elite, by which the knowledge it possesses – achieved by way of information obtained through various diplomatic measures and activities, seen from today's perspective – together with the means of political persuasion, allows it to interact with the military power so as to predict or determine the outcome, as well as resolve any issues which could emerge during the implementation process, in an attempt to achieve one or more political ends.[646] The author of *On Envoys* clearly indicates that the Byzantine government was aware of the process of planning ahead and simulating hypothetical scenarios and solutions (regardless of how rudimentary these were) i.e., about predicting the outcome. This procedure was applied to envoys who were preparing to go on a mission abroad.[647] A similar planning exists in *The Book of Ceremonies*, when the military campaign in Southern Italy during the reign of Romanos I Lekapenos is discussed.[648] An additional confirmation about the existence of this process is the advice of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos to his son, that the ruler must study what is known about the near and more distant nations, so that he can understand "...the difference between other nations, their origins and customs and manner of life, and the position and climate of the land they dwell in, and its geographical description and measurement...", but also "...the difference between each of these nations, and how either to treat with and conciliate them, or to make war upon and oppose them".[649] This information in *De Administrando Imperio* indicates that the Byzantines possessed some knowledge which made them fully aware of the necessity to carry out more comprehensive and long-term strategic planning[650] focused not only on containing and resolving immediate political and military threats from the surrounding regions, but also on creating a defensive ring of allies around the imperial borders. Regarding the long-term strategic planning, the fact that this type of knowledge existed amongst the members of the imperial government is clearly evident from Konstantinos VII's suggestion for the security on the eastern border to be improved by annexation of the Armenian principalities, or rather by capturing several cities around Lake Van and the establishment of direct authority over these polities,[651] a proposal which was gradually accomplished and finally completed by his successors in

646 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 409.

647 On Strategy, 43.39-42. For a detailed analysis see Lee and Shepard, "A Double Life", 15-29. The Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz, in Stern, "An embassy", 249, confirms that the imperial envoys who were sent on a mission were prepared in that manner.

648 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 660-661.

649 *DAI*, prooimion.19-22, 25-27, 13.197-200. See also Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 270-271

650 *DAI*, prooimion.12-17, refers to the "doctrine" (διδασκαλίαν) that Porphyrogennetos placed before his son and heir, so that he could understand "...in what each nation has power to advantage the Romans, and in what to hurt, and how and by what other nation each severally may be encountered in arms and subdued". See also Nicol, "Byzantine political thought", 56-57.

651 *DAI*, 44.125-128. See Shepard, "Imperial Information and Ignorance", 110-111.

the middle of the 11th century.[652] So, from a sociological aspect, if the existence of a concept of strategy aimed at achieving long-term political interests and ends is indisputable (regardless of whether it would meet the present day standards for the use of this term), then the question of how the Byzantines tried to accomplish these ends remains open.

From the sources and military manuals, one can clearly see the defensive aspect of the Byzantine military thought – the preference of implementing various tactics over direct military confrontation.[653] The static in-depth defence through the creation of several security lines of military forts and fortified settlements, which was finally established as a defensive military strategy during the 6th century,[654] but also billeting of military forces in the interior of the state accompanied with the formation of military districts and later of the *themata*, complements this fact. Actually, the first act of the Byzantines was not to change the current situation in their favour, but to re-establish the military and political equilibrium which existed before the conflict had begun. The reason for utilizing military forces as a last resort for resolving political and military threats, or achieving political ends, is of a practical nature. From the middle of the 7th century onwards the Byzantine policy was, in fact, crisis management on a huge scale in which, due to the constant military threats, the resources of the government (primarily human) were directed towards defending the remaining imperial territories. For one to expect a pre-industrial society in a highly hostile political environment, surrounded on all sides by potential enemies and simultaneously fighting on more than one front, to allocate its resources for accomplishing political interests and ends on a long-term basis, and to achieve these by military means, when even during periods of peace the financial income collected from taxes was used mainly to meet the military needs, is irrational since this process requires significant revenues that no medieval state possessed. This would basically lead the economic base of the state to a collapse caused by the high amounts of financial and other logistical resources needed to maintain an army on a permanent war readiness.[655]

Unable to use its military forces as a primary asset for pursuing political interests, due to the exceptionally difficult geopolitical situation, as well as the lack of sufficient financial and human resources, the Byzantine government took a very pragmatic approach. It replaced the military activity with another more sophisticated method of

652 Timothy W. Greenwood, "Armenian Neighbours (600-1045)", in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500-1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 362-363.

653 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 415-418.

654 Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 252-259.

655 For the volume of the logistical support and resources which the Byzantine government needed in order to prepare the army for an upcoming campaign, see *The Book of Ceremonies*, 664-667. The costs and resources for the maintaining of the army would increase in proportion to the duration of the military campaign for which it was recruited.

action which had a political and ideological aspect in it: the art of persuasion and ample use of non-military means, known today as diplomacy, thus putting aside the military forces as a last resort. This was extremely practical for the Byzantines. On the one hand, this approach was in line with the basic postulates of the imperial political ideology, the theory of Christian philanthropy and the image of the emperor as protector of the "Chosen people"; and on the other, it preserved the resources for the defence of the "besieged" state from future enemy attacks. All this led victories over the enemy or reintegration of lost territories to be highly praised in the Byzantine society if it were carried out without shedding of "Roman blood", for instance the campaigns of Konstantinos V against Bulgaria.[656] It was only during the economic and demographic revival of the Byzantine Empire, which is clearly noticeable from the middle of the 9th century onward, that the imperial government pursued its own political interests with military means and offensive warfare. What the sources point out is that the Byzantines used their armed forces not only as a means of deterrence and intimidation i.e., to demonstrate a *show of force*, such as the campaigns of Konstantinos V and Michael III against Bulgaria,[657] but as a major asset in Byzantine strategic planning.[658] Actually, in the period around the 10th and first half of 11th century, the imperial army played a significant role in reintegrating the Armenian principalities, Southern Italy and the Balkans, but in combination with diplomatic means. Similar situations can be seen towards the end of the 11th and 12th centuries, during the time of the Komnenos dynasty, when Byzantine authority was partially restored in Asia Minor by military force.[659]

Fully aware of the difficult situation in which they found themselves, instead of sending armies on the battlefield to maintain the imperial status, reintegrate former imperial territories, or resolve an immediate political problem (except in the period of "reconquista"), the Byzantine government often sought to pursue these interests through diplomacy and by imposing its political hegemony i.e., with its *soft power*. This manner of subjugating foreign rulers who, according to the Byzantines, ruled on former imperial territories, leaving the internal structure and independence of these states intact in the

656 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 326.; *Theophanes*, 617. See also Haldon, "'Blood and ink'", 286-287, and Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 44-45.

657 Dragan Gjalevski, "Zaplašuvanjeto kako diplomatsko sredstvo vo balkanskata politika na Vasilij II", in *Balkanot: Lugje, vojni i mir, Materijali od megjunarodnata naučna konferencija po povod 65 godini od osnovanjeto na Institutot za nacionalna istorija (Skopje, 4-5 noemvri, 2013)*, red. Dragi Gjorgiev i dr. (Skopje: Institute of National History, 2015), 50.

658 Taktika, IX.22, XVII.27, XVII.91.; On Strategy, 43.11-13. About the campaigns of Basileios II in Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 326, 328.; *Rozen, Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 34.22-26.

659 Sullivan, "Byzantine fronts and Strategies", 287-288. For the Balkans see Gjalevski, "Byzantine politics", 66-67.

process and creating *limitrophe* client states,[660] was more practical, pragmatic and less expensive because the military option actually required considerable resources needed not only for campaigning but also for the establishment of stable military and administrative structure throughout the reintegrated territories. Another example of the implementation of *soft power* by which the imperial status was maintained, was the political and ideological construction known as "hierarchy of states" or "family of kinship" where, in relation to the Byzantine emperor, the position of the foreign rulers was determined in international relations.[661] For this purpose, the Byzantine Empire used various diplomatic means: from conferring imperial aulic titles with rich financial incentives, baptism of foreign rulers and other dignitaries, the bestowment of various precious gifts to important foreigners, to the use of trouble-shooters (officials who were assigned to deal with particularly troublesome situations in a state or region of political interests) or man-on-the-spot (a foreigner who protected Byzantine interests in their place of origin).[662]

There is sufficient information in the sources which indicate the long-term efforts of several successive Byzantine emperors to achieve and/or maintain the political ends through a concept of ideas, plans and means (both political and military), and for the processes of their implementation determined according to the specificity of each of the regions of political interest and the current availability of resources.[663] Also, an indication to the continuity in pursuing the same political ends and the use of identical means and strategies, a *modus operandi*, regarding a particular region can be observed in more than one Byzantine government, despite the fact that some of these faced certain setbacks or a total failure of the process. This can be clearly noticed in the Byzantine foreign policy towards the Serbian principalities and Croatia in the Balkans,[664] the Armenian principalities in Transcaucasia and the Lombard duchies in Southern Italy during the period of the Macedonian dynasty. Furthermore, the policy of maintaining the imperial status was implemented when needed by all Byzantine emperors in every region of political interest,

660 For the Middle-Byzantine Period see Dragan Gjalevski, "Strategic Planning in the Middle-Byzantine Period: A Limitrophe Policy Reintroduced?", *Studia Ceranea*, Vol.13 (2023): 29-55. About the Roman origin of this policy, see Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, 19-42, 125-132.

661 According to Chrysos, "Byzantine diplomacy", 36-37, there is no evidence in the sources that a "family of kinship" ever existed. However, Lampakis, *Byzantine diplomacy*, 40-46, rightly points out that it was established not through relationship by blood but through imperial court titles.

662 Jonathan Shepard, "Trouble-shooters and Man-on-the-spot: The emperor's dealings with outsiders", *Le Relazioni Internazionali Nell'alto Medioevo* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo, 2011), 691-723.

663 Among other sources, on Byzantine long-term policy in regards to the Armenian principalities see *DAI*, 44.125-128, or about the attempts to reconquer Crete during the 10th century and the campaigns of Leon VI in 911, Konstantinos VII in 949 and Romanos II in 961 in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 664-678, and *Leo the Deacon*, 58-59, 80-81.

664 Gjalevski, "An Outline", 21-46.

be it the Islamic World, the Black Sea region, the Balkans or Western Europe. The set of measures which were used and the strategy to implement these were selected according to the specificity of the region. An example of this is the Byzantine policy towards the Pontic steppe which intensified from the end of the 9th century, and was based on the knowledge that had been gathered over the past centuries.[665] Byzantine political interests and ends were one and same over a longer period of time, to maintain a military and political equilibrium, as were the diplomatic means and the manner of their overall implementation,[666] with minor changes due to a new factor, a state, nation or a tribe, that had emerged in this region. These long-term political interests and ends, general or specific to a certain region, as well as the prolonged, if not always continuous, attempts of several Byzantine governments to achieve and/or maintain these by way of distinct strategic concepts, are actually the main indicator that some form of state-level strategy, to which succeeding imperial governments also adhered to, existed.

From the previously presented examples which indicate the existence of a certain set of ideas, plans, methods and skills intended to achieve the political interests and ends, a certain image concerning the Byzantine state-level strategy can be formed. What is indisputably noticeable is that throughout the entire history of the Byzantine Empire no blueprint of a detailed "grand" plan, which is more of a modern solution, was ever established. Although the sources do not reveal the existence of any organized comprehensive guide, policy framework, policy doctrines or set of ideas shared by policy makers among the emperor and his advisors in a written form, nevertheless one can notice the presence of certain basic principles of behaviour in relation to the resolution of political and military problems, some unwritten principles of political activities which have permeated since the Late antique period, if not from the early Roman Empire, based, at least in part, on some pre-existing assumptions among the leading officials in the state formed as a result of the experience gained over the centuries in this sphere of statecraft. The existence of a different foreign policy for each region (for instance the Pontic steppe) and its consistent monitoring by the Byzantine government only confirms this view. However,

[665] Byzantine policy towards the Black Sea region in the period between 5th and 7th century was aimed at gaining allies by bestowing gold, conferment of titles and baptism, as indicated by *The Chronicle of John of Malalas*, tr. Elisabeth Jeffreys et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 233, 247, 250.; *Menander*, 10.3.21-106., and *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople. Short History*, tr. Cyril Mango (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990), 9.1-9. For the Byzantine policy in the steppe region until the 7th century, see Ekatherina Nechaeva, "Patterns of Roman diplomacy with Iran and the Steppe people", in *Empires and exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca.250-750*, ed. Nicola di Cosmo and Michael Mass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 358-364.; Maas, "How the Steppes became Byzantine.", 19-34. An identical Byzantine policy is noted during the 10th century towards the Magyars, Pechenegs and the Rus, as reported in *DAI*, 13.14-28.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.; *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 82, 110-111.

[666] One example is the Byzantine policy towards the Pechenegs recorded in *DAI*, 1.16-24,7.3-17.

what is characterized as a basic principle of conduct in the Byzantine foreign policy, or a possible "grand" principle, is in fact a consequence of the pattern of behaviour which is already presented in the Byzantine Studies and is named with the term "operational code". According to Luttwak, the basic principle of this operational code is to *avoid war by every possible means in all possible circumstances, but always act as if it might start at any time.* In that direction, it was more than necessary to collect vital information *on the enemy and its mentality*[667] in order to be able to act as best as possible. This method of using the same measures is a result of the success which certain ideas and plans achieved while being practically applied by the Byzantine government to resolve military and political conflicts with other political entities. Hence, the successive acquisition of the same states or tribes as allies in order to fight instead of the Byzantines in the conflict against their enemy, as in the case of the Magyars and Pechenegs with the Bulgarian knyaz/emperor Simeon or Svyatoslav, the prince of Rus, are just some of the examples which refer to the pattern of behaviour regarding Byzantine diplomacy,[668] to which Luttwak himself points out when presenting his "operational code".[669]

In fact, in relation to the Byzantine state-level strategy, certain considerations and assumptions can be put forth regarding the methods of strategic operation which result from modern scientific analysis, and are unequivocally noticeable in the Byzantine policies of this period and in their application on the field. In that context, several variables of state measures which participate in the conception and practical implementation of the Byzantine state-level strategy can be singled out e.g., political ideology, which is responsible for shaping the political interests and ends, as well as for ensuring the legitimacy of the state's measures, military strategy and tactics, economic policy and diplomacy, but also the state bureaucracy i.e., its role and capacity in collecting and distributing the necessary resources. All these variables, principles of state-level measures, through mutual interaction and level of application, together with the external factors of influence, used to form several basic theoretical strategic concepts i.e., methods, such as:

- Military containment and expansion,
- Balance of power,
- Alliance,
- Policy of appeasement.

667 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy,* 416.
668 On Strategy, 6.14-17.
669 According to Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 417, his seventh point of the "operational code" is the policy of successfully ending wars *by recruiting allies to change the overall balance of power*.

It is necessary to note that these several basic methods within the state-level strategy are not separate alternatives which would be mutually exclusive, but they should be followed and combined depending on the current situation in the international relations and domestic situations, both militarily and politically, as well as economically. The concept of military containment and expansion was based mainly on the use of military force to resolve a political or military conflict, including the use of defensive and offensive activities (strategy and tactics), a policy of deterrence through *show of force* and/or by intimidation, while the diplomacy was supposed to gather information about the intentions and policies of the enemy (military intelligence), although it could also be used to intimidate the enemy through statements about possible attacks or formation of military alliances directed against him. The Balance of power method is based on the short-term use of a third party against the enemy or through maintaining a political situation of equilibrium which was shaped by several states with an almost identical level of power and which allowed the emergence of shifting alliances, where diplomacy took precedence over the use of military force. The concept of Alliance is characterized by the unification of several states in a single union (commonwealth, union or military alliance with a common defence plan) behind sharing same goals and interests, while the diplomacy was assigned with the complex task of maintaining the commonwealth, not allowing any of the partners to move away from the alliance. The policy of Appeasement is based on maintaining the existing *status quo* by making concessions to the enemy in exchange for his intention to take military action, in which diplomacy plays the main role, while the military forces have no important task except as a tool for negotiation.[670]

What can be noted in the sources is that between the middle of the 9th and beginning of 11th century, when the Byzantine government applied these different methods, or rather a combination of the same, their use depended on the international political relations between the states and the internal conditions (political and military) in the Byzantine Empire itself which existed at the moment.[671] One of these had a primary role, while the rest, or only a part of them, had a secondary place within the state-level strategy aimed at achieving the short-term or long-term interests and goals. So, the method of military containment and expansion can be seen in the campaign of Michael III against Boris of Bulgaria, in the long war with Simeon where the Byzantine government intimidated the Bulgarian ruler about a possible military campaign or military alliance directed against him through correspondence, as well as in the military conflict with Samuil. The best example for the use

[670] For a detailed analysis of these strategy concepts see Charalambos Papasotiriou, *Byzantine Grand Strategy*, PhD dissertation, Stanford University: Ann Arbor, 1992, 6-20.

[671] In his doctoral dissertation Papasotiriou, *Byzantine Grand Strategy*, 20-34, puts forth only a few of the large number of possible combinations of these basic methods.

of the Balance of power in the Byzantine foreign policy is the Pontic steppe, for which *De Administrando Imperio* advises that the control of this region, and thus the activities of the states, nations and tribes in it, should be carried out by maintaining friendly relations with the Pechenegs,[672] or through signing peace treaties. There is an abundance of information in the sources on implementation of the Alliance method. Apart from alliances between two states, there is also formation of some kind of ideologically based commonwealth, which the academic world today refers to as "hierarchy of states" or "family of kinship". In fact, the sources report about creation of a ring of allied states, nations and tribes around the Byzantine frontiers where the Armenian principalities, the peoples beyond Transcaucasia (Abasgi and Alans), Croatia and the Serbian principalities in the Balkans, and the Lombard duchies from Southern Italy, established closer political relations through signing of treaties with the Byzantine Empire and agreed to accept the hegemony of the emperor, political and military supremacy, thus becoming vassals or client states with a high level of independence, which as *limitrophe* allies had their own duties i.e., obligations, for instance providing military aid or securing the border from enemy incursions. Beyond these border client states, in the Black Sea region peace treaties on a military and political parity basis were concluded with the Magyars, Rus and the Pechenegs in case the balance of power method failed to produce the desired results. Unlike the previous methods, the policy of Appeasement was applied only when the Byzantine Empire was in an extremely unfavourable situation, for example: in 896 when Leon VI bought the peace with Bulgaria after he agreed to give a tribute, in 911 when peace with the Rus was made possible by allowing favourable trade concessions as part of the treaty, or in 917, when following several catastrophic defeats from Simeon, a truce was concluded only after the Bulgarian ruler was conferred with the title of *basileus*.

Regarding the propriate terminology i.e., whether the state-level strategy which was unwittingly formed, shaped and implemented by the officials of the Byzantine Empire based on a pattern of behaviour (grand behaviour), can be termed as "grand strategy", as some scholars already do for convenience, one should take into account that it does not contain all modern elements and features that characterize it. However, since this state-level strategy nevertheless in some manner represents a consequence of the art of statecraft that, in turn, has been the subject of study for millennia starting from the ancient civilizations of the past, it could, in my opinion, be named appropriately with the term "statecraft strategy",[673] which would distinguish it from the similar type of strate-

672 The author of *DAI*, 4.3-5, advises that "...so long as the emperor of the Romans is at peace with the Pechenegs, neither Russians or Turks (Magyars) can come upon the Roman dominions by force of arms."

673 According to Kaplan, "An introduction", 548, the term strategy of statecraft "...includes the construction of strategies for securing the national [state] interest in the international arena, as well as the execution of these strategies by diplomats".

gies that states had formed after the emergence of the modern theoretical approaches, starting with the work of Carl von Clausewitz's *On War*,[674] and the establishment of the term "grand strategy" which is in use today.

Whether this pattern of behaviour in Byzantine foreign policy, which is noted in the sources, will be termed "statecraft strategy" as I prefer owing to the fact that it was a result of the art of conducting state affairs, or as "grand strategy" in order to point out the basic features it has in relation to this modern state phenomenon (pattern of behaviour), or only as "state-level strategy" just to emphasize its scope and duration, what can be concluded is that the Byzantines were not only aware (within their capabilities) of the necessity to establish a set of various measures to solve immediate military and political problems that arose during the day-to-day conducting of state affairs, but also of strategic planning in a wider territorial scope and over prolonged period of time, something that, in relation to the present day meaning of this terminology would seem extremely rudimentary or elementary. Diplomatic and military measures that were being continuously used in Byzantine foreign policy, as well as the decision which of them should be applied, and how and where to be applied, was a result of the knowledge acquired and implemented by the imperial government in accordance with the factors that strongly influenced its practical application. This interaction was, actually, shaping the overall strategic planning. It was with this knowledge that the Byzantines attempted to achieve their long-term political interests and ends.

[674] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, tr. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Byzantine Strategy in the Balkans and the role of Military in Diplomacy

"Setting his heart on military glory, he [Romanus III] prepared for war against the barbarians, east and west. Victory over the western barbarians, however easy, seemed no great triumph, but an attack on the eastern enemies, he thought, would win him fame and will conduct his imperial duties with dignity"

Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, III.7

Byzantine political measures and military activities in the Balkans between the middle of the 9th and beginning of the 11th century were a result of the geopolitical and historical context of this region, the economic importance of the peninsula to the imperial government, the available human and financial resources in the state, and the military experience which was gained as a result of the numerous threats that the Empire managed to withstand over the centuries. All these factors had a significant influence in positioning and implementation not only of diplomacy, but also of military forces within the state-level strategy through which the Byzantine emperor protected and maintained the state interests in this region.[675] Unlike the universality of implementation in regards to the political activities which we today refer to as diplomacy, the primary role of the army, if the medieval practice of the use of military force was followed, was to prevent the aggressive intentions of the enemy by waging a decisive pitch battle. However, the deployment of the army on the battlefield was not always for this purpose. Sometimes the armed forces were deployed just as a deterrence measure, to make a *show of force* in the field, thus becoming in a way a tool of diplomacy. Other times the imperial army was not deployed in the field, but the battles with the enemy were fought by others as a result of the diplomatic measures. In fact, as indicated by the Byzantine military manuals, in

[675] For more details about the establishment of the Byzantine military strategy that arose in response to the immediate danger from Attila and the Huns in the beginning of the 5th century see Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 1-14.

most of the conflicts when the armed forces were operating on the field, they were used as a foreign policy deterrent by the imperial government in such manner that these were supposed to stop the enemy and force him to retreat or surrender, without facing him on the battlefield. More precisely, the objective was to win a war without fighting one decisive battle i.e., it was to be achieved through intelligent use of the enemy's weaknesses, geographical and seasonal climate factors, as well as diplomacy.[676] But, in cases when the Byzantine government considered that the situation on the ground was favourable and the imperial army was superior, as it was during the 10th century, especially during its second half, then we can notice an increased waging of pitch battles, which were accompanied, once more, with the use of additional diplomatic measures, all aimed at the more effective achievement of the outlined political ends.

In regards to the Balkan Peninsula and the configuration of its terrain, although most of it was covered by high mountain ranges, nevertheless, it did not represent a significant natural barrier which would prevent an uninterrupted movement of people as a result of the numerous passes and defiles that existed between them. In fact, it was one of the more accessible regions for various groups' intent on looting, especially in the area around the lower reaches of the Danube River. This state of constant inflow of various tribes in the Balkans has been noted countless times throughout the Byzantine history, starting from the end of the 4th century with the invasions of the Goths, Huns and Kutrigurs, the migration of the various Slavic tribes in the 600s, ending with the settlement of the Bulgars in 680 when the new political mosaic was finally assembled. But despite all these developments, the Byzantines did not undertake any long-term military actions. The reason for that was the level of political and economic importance which this region had for the imperial government in Constantinople. Seen from a demographic and economic point of view, the Balkan Peninsula was one of the least populated and least rich imperial territories within the Byzantine Empire, not only before the crisis of the late 6th and early 7th centuries, but also afterwards.[677] In fact, the Balkans was an area with low priority in the policy of the emperor, especially when there was a very clear danger for the security of the provinces in Asia Minor which from the middle of the 7th century basically represented the economic core of the Byzantine Empire.

For the Byzantine Empire, as for any other state in the Middle Ages, the biggest problem that could arise in relation to military policies was the simultaneous warfare on at least two fronts. Familiar with their own military and economic situation, as well as with the geo-

676 *Das Strategikon*, II.1.8-14, VII.A.8-12, VIII.2.4, VIII.2.99.

677 See Michael F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c.300-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 21-25, 35-39, 69-76.

strategic environment, the Byzantines were aware that a simultaneous offensive warfare on several fronts would cause a significant strain on the limited resources they had at their disposal at the moment. In fact, it could even lead to disastrous consequences for the overall stability of the Byzantine state. Therefore, the Byzantine political activities were aimed at avoiding this situation.[678] If there was a possible war on several fronts, the provinces in Asia Minor had an advantage over the Balkan Peninsula, not only because after the loss of Egypt, Palestine and Syria in the middle of the 7th century these regions were the main source of financial and human resources through which the imperial power in Constantinople was maintained, but because that ideologically, the Byzantine Empire considered the Arabs a much more important enemy than the pagan Bulgars. Defeat by this enemy represented a serious blow to the prestige of the Byzantine emperor in the eyes of his subjects, but also among the Christians throughout the world, since he was the guardian of the one true faith.[679] This military and strategic concept remained unchanged until the end of the 11th century, when after the conquest of the largest part of Asia Minor by the Seljuk Turks, the Balkans became the economic base of the imperial power.

The low priority of the Balkans in the Byzantine security policy did not mean that the imperial provinces in this region were left unprotected. In fact, the Byzantine strategic thought throughout history was a result of combination of the available resources in the state, the geographical configuration of the terrain and the character of the peoples for whom these measures were intended. Primary concern of the Byzantine government and its military commanders was basically the defence of the territories which were still under imperial administration. This shift to full defensiveness was a consequence of the Arab conquests across the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond, when several Byzantine military attempts to defeat and push back the enemy through waging pitched battles failed completely.[680] As a result of the lack of resources, both financial and human, the Byzantines decided to adopt a more flexible approach. Instead of direct military engagement on the battlefield, they established a permeable frontier with "no man's land" and a static hard defence – forts, towers and fortified settlements across the regions that were target of enemy raids, defended by small military forces that waged what is now called an asymmetric guerrilla warfare, a strategy that left an extremely wide space for the diplomacy to act.[681]

678 Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 36-38, 46-51. As well John Haldon, *Byzantium at War AD 600-1453* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 36-38.

679 *Michaelis Pselli*, III.7.1-4. See also Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 42.

680 Syrianos Magistros, author of the treaty On Strategy, 5.2-5, reports that "...the strategy teaches us how to defend what is our own and to threaten what belongs to the enemy. The defensive is the means by which one acts to guard his own people and their property, the offensive is the means by which one retaliates against his opponents".

681 Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 252.; Haldon, *Byzantium at War*, 39.

Strategy of "Defence in depth"

Sources and archaeological findings unequivocally point to the fact that the strategy of permeable frontier with "no man's land" and a static hard defence applied by the Byzantine government from the middle of the 7th century throughout Asia Minor,[682] was actually used before by the Roman Empire. According to the sources, during the 3rd and 4th centuries, the Roman emperors established a type of "defence-in-depth" throughout the imperial provinces strategy with fortresses and fortified towers located at places that had an excellent tactical position, as well as in the border regions and near important roads, but also by fortifying settlements, towns and cities, which were protected by local military detachments, militia or by a small mobile army, or by all of them, in response to the barbarian raids that appeared during this period.[683] Similar measures were later taken by Emperor Justinian I who, according to Procopius, built and reconstructed cities, towns, settlements, fortresses and fortified refuges, for the local population throughout the Empire, not only in the border regions, but also deep in the interior, of ca.600 of which in the Balkans.[684] The same situation can be observed during the later period. The reintegrated

[682] That this policy was widely implemented during the 10th century is indicated by Hudūd al-ʿĀlam, *The Regions of the World. A Persian Geography 372 A.H.–982 A.D.*, tr. Vladimir Minorsky (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 156-157, a Persian writer from this period, who wrote that "in the days of old cities were numerous in Rum, but now they have become few. Most of the cities are prosperous and pleasant, and have (each) an extremely strong fortress, on account on the frequency of the raids which the fighters for the faith direct upon them. To each village appertains a castle where in the time of flight [they may take shelter]." Regarding the implementation of this defensive policy in Asia Minor see John Haldon and Hugh Kennedy, "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries", *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 19 (1980): 96-97.; Haldon, "Information and War", 381-385.

[683] For analysis of the Roman defence-in-depth policy in the 3rd and 4th centuries see Luttwak, *The grand strategy of the Roman Empire*, 149-166.

[684] For Justinian I building policy see Procopius, *Buildings. General Index*, tr. Henry B. Dewing (London/Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University press, 1940), passim. Also, Timothy E. Gregory, *A History of Byzantium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 135.; James A. Evans, *The Emperor Justinian and the Byzantine Empire* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2005), 55.; Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije*, 90. That this defensive policy was practically applied on the field by the imperial government can be clearly noticed in some of the Byzantine military manuals. For instance, the author of On Strategy, 6.3-10, notes that "...one way of arranging a good defence is to station sentinels and troops in outposts, to light signal fires, and to set up fortified positions to give warning of the approach of the enemy. Second, in anticipation of enemy attacks we can erect walls, outer ramparts, and dig moats. Then, upon the actual approach of the enemy, most of our people can gather together behind them." These military posts were essential for allowing the people that were living in the imperial provinces which were under direct enemy attack to take refuge not only in the strongholds, but also "...on mountains, in caves, and on any readily defensible island." Also, Skirmishing, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and tr. George T. Dennis (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), prooimion.9-11, 1.10-12, 2.3-6, a military manual from the second half of 10th century written on behalf of Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas and with the aim that this strategy shouldn't be forgotten in case "...in the future...some situation should

Balkan regions under the emperor Konstantinos V and his successors were secured and defended through the policy of fortifying towns, as well as by building of military fortresses and refuges.[685]

In fact, as a result of the extremely unfavourable military and political situation, the easy accessibility of the imperial territories from the north, as well as the inadequate military forces stationed in the Balkans, important for conducting offensive military operations, the Byzantines, it seems, consciously relied on this strategy, which is also named as "bricks and mortar" strategy.[686] At the same time, it is reasonable to expect that this defensive strategy was applied even after the middle of the 9th century as a result of the unchanged security situation. The initial analyses indicate this. The Byzantine government did not stop the policy of fortification of the urban centres in the Balkans. That Constantinople was an impregnable fortress is generally known, however the sources, as well as the archaeological finds report that in the period of the 10th and 11th centuries, the cities throughout the regions of medieval Macedonia, Thrace and *themata* Hellada, starting from Thessalonica, Philippoupolis and Adrianoupolis, down to the smallest settlements were most likely surrounded by high walls. The archaeological findings from the city of Philippi indicated demolition of the ancient and construction of new stronger walls carried out during the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas. The same situation can be observed in fourteen other towns in Eastern Macedonia, where their naming as *kastra* appears for the first time towards the end of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century. It is interesting to note that even Bizye, a small town in Thrace with "numerous markets" and without any major strategic significance, was fortified, just like other small towns in the immediate surroundings of Constantinople, for example Tzouroulos, Selymbria, Rousion and Rhaedestos. The continuity of this strategy is noticeable not only during the reign of Emperor Basileios II, when during the long war against Samuil he built or rebuilt a large number of fortresses in the Balkans, but also throughout the 11th and 12th centuries.[687] A partial departure from the "defence in depth" strategy existed after the victory over Svyatoslav in 971. In an attempt to prevent future Rus encroachment into

arise in which Christians need this knowledge...", the first two chapters are fully dedicated to this military matter. What the author suggest is that "...if there are high and rugged mountains on the frontier with the enemy, they [the commanders] should place the watch posts on them. The posts for the sentries should be about three or four miles apart." On the matter of "defence-in-depth", he notes that "...the role played by the sentries along the roads is essential. The General must devote a good deal of attention to these also and set up their posts in suitable locations."

685 *Theophanes*, 429.

686 Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 252-259.

687 For more details on this process along with an exhaustive bibliography see Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 255-259.

the Balkans, sources report that Ioannes I Tzimiskes established a firm border in the lower reaches of the Danube River that consisted of significant number of fortresses and military units which were part of a newly established *thema* named "Mesopotamia of the West". This policy was not renewed after the re-establishment of the Byzantine frontier on the Danube in the year 1000.[688]

The idea behind this strategy of "defence in depth", or "strategy of protraction", was that settlements in the Balkans could withstand enemy attacks and sieges as long as needed, until the relief would arrive. Although originally established during the 3rd and 4th centuries to prevent or minimize the damage from the incursions of the steppe tribes beyond the Danube, by delaying and avoiding direct battle which would then lead to their retreat due to lack of food and forage,[689] the difficult military and political situation and the constant pressure from the Arabs from the mid-7th century forced the Byzantines to continue to rely on this strategy for defence of the remaining imperial territories in the Balkans. It was also used when the imperial provinces were under attack by enemy forces already familiar with the siege technique, such as the Bulgars and the Rus, mostly as a result of the fact that the main military units were stationed throughout the territory of Asia Minor. Therefore, the success of this strategy depended not only on the fortifications, but also on the Byzantine army units that were specially mobilized from other provinces in the state and sent to the crisis region to contain or prevent the threat, as well as on the use of various diplomatic means.

However, if the army could not or was slow to act in the field, the diplomatic activity was quick and agile. By giving a financial compensation i.e., a bribe, spreading disinformation, offering numerous gifts or a truce, the Byzantine government tried to stop the raid or the campaign of conquest in its infancy, and if this was not possible, the next goal was to introduce discord into the enemy army, in an attempt to reduce its combat readiness. Along with these diplomatic measures, the Byzantines also tried to prevent this kind of threat from happening again in the future. Several Byzantine diplomatic activities of this type are confirmed in the sources. The first such example is the truce negotiated by the *patrikios* Theophanes immediately after the campaign of the Magyars in 934,[690] while in 943, following another of their raid into the imperial territory, this same Byzantine envoy managed to conclude an official treaty with the Magyar leader from the Arpad's clan.[691]

688 Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 253-254.

689 Avoiding a pitch battle is advised by the authors of Byzantine military manuals such as, *Das Strategikon*, VII.A.45-52, VIII.1.7. For the Byzantine strategy of "defence in depth" see Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 259-269.

690 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 423.2-7.; Skylitzes, Synopsis, 220-221.

691 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 430.23-431.3.; *Symeon Magister*, 748.2-4.; *Georgius Monachus*, 917.7-10.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 223.

Identical diplomatic activity was undertaken by the Byzantines against the Rus during their surprise attack in 907,[692] as well as during the campaign in 943.[693] Discord among the enemy ranks appears to have been implemented in the Byzantine-Rus War of 970, when the allies of the Rus prince Svyatoslav, the Pechenegs and the Magyars, defected to the Byzantines before the start of the offensive which was conducted by Ioannes I Tzimiskes. The exceptional usefulness of diplomatic measures in the Byzantine strategy was in their ability to function outside the regional framework of the conflict and with the help of a small number of individuals to operate outside the borders of the Byzantine Empire which, by finding allies against the enemy, would change the chances of victory in favour of the emperor. However, the use of diplomacy did not always bring immediate success on the battlefield. The war that was waged with the Bulgarian ruler Simeon during the first decades of the 10th century, as well as the long conflict with Samuil which finally ended in the second decade of the 11th century, is evidence of the limitation of its capabilities.

"Provoke and observe" policy

The Byzantine strategy in the Balkans in the period between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of 11th century was based on fortified settlements, supported by military forces and diplomatic means. If the enemy was not discouraged by the fortifications and the deployed army, in order to stop his military aggression, the Byzantine government usually turned to diplomatic measures. What means, and how these were used, depended on the Byzantine perception of the military power of the enemy, the current military and political situation and the requirements in the field. When the enemy was united, they were either ineffective or impossible to implement. But when this was not the case, i.e., the situation was in favour of the Byzantines, we can see frequent use of these means which not only supplemented, but sometimes even completely replaced the activities of the military forces in achieving the intended goal. In fact, the use of the army to fight in pitch battle was allowed only when the Byzantine government was certain of its military superiority over the enemy, when there was a truce on the eastern frontier, or when the other two options for driving the enemy away from Byzantine territory, the strategy of "defence in depth" and diplomacy, failed.

In case the "defence in depth" did not give the desired result, and the military forces could not operate in the field or had to be protected from unnecessary human loss-

692 For this sudden attack in 907 see *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 64-65. Cf. *Symeon Magister*, 706.12-707.10.
693 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 73.

es, the first step taken by the Byzantine government represented a kind of a diplomatic measure with an explicit military character which can be called a "provoke and observe" policy and is witnessed in the military treaty *On Strategy*. The author of this work clearly states that, if "...the enemy is advancing against us and we are unable to face them in open battle..." then "...we can stir up neighboring peoples against them".[694] More precisely, the idea, as well as the main goal behind this strategy was to make the new allies that were won over, to act militarily on the battlefield instead of the Byzantine army.

The Byzantines used this policy whenever possible. Its implementation from the middle of the 9th until the beginning of 11th century is first noticed in the Byzantine-Bulgarian war of 893 when the Magyars, at that time settled beyond the Danube River in the regions of the Pontic steppe, successfully carried out the military task to defeat the Bulgarian ruler. Its next use was noted again during 917, once more against Simeon, but this attempt by the Byzantines ended in a complete fiasco, as a result of the successful countermeasures taken by the Bulgarian emperor. This military-diplomatic measure was also used in 968 by Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas who, through payment of a sum of gold amounting 15 *kentenaria*, achieved to win over the Rus led by Svyatoslav, to attack the Bulgarians from the north, which soon happened.

This policy can also be observed in *De Administrando Imperio.* The second chapter notes that "...Russians [cannot] come at this imperial city of the Romans, either for war or for trade, unless they are at peace with the Pechenegs, because when the Russians come with their ships to the barrages of the river [Dnieper] and cannot pass through unless they lift their ships off the river and carry them past by portaging them on their shoulders, then the men of this nation of the Pechenegs set upon them, and, as they cannot do two things at once, they are easily routed and cut to pieces".[695] This tactic is presented even more directly in the fourth chapter, where it is emphasized that "...so long as the emperor of the Romans is at peace with the Pechenegs, neither Russians or Turks can come upon the Roman dominions by force of arms, nor can they extract from the Romans large and inflated sums in money and goods as the price for peace, for they fear the strength of this nation which the emperor can turn against them while they are campaigning against the Romans".[696]

The testimony of this policy for dealing with a possible future Rus military threat in *De Administrando Imperio* points to the fact that it was apparently finally defined after a longer period of gathering information and more intensive observation of the situation in the wider region. This strategy in the form presented by Konstantinos VII, seems to

694 On Strategy, 6.14-17.
695 *DAI*, 2.16-23.
696 Ibid, 4.3-8.

have become an active part of the foreign policy of the Byzantine government after the campaign of prince Igor in 941. According to Liudprand of Cremona, the Byzantines were taken completely by surprise and the emperor spent many "sleepless nights" thinking about what to do when the great Rus fleet appeared in the waters of the Bosporus.[697] In the beginning, the Byzantines, with help of about fifteen old vessels equipped with Greek fire, managed to inflict a heavy defeat on the Rus fleet. The surviving Rus forces began pillaging and ravaging the areas of Bithynia. However, they were soon defeated by the Byzantine army which was sent to stop their further raiding. In their attempt to return to their country, the remaining Rus fleet was intercepted and completely defeated.[698] What is noticeable about the source material is that it does not report about the existence of any idea on the part of the Byzantine government to use the Pechenegs as a military asset against the Rus. Instead, the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos used only his own military resources against Igor's forces.

In contrast to this event, the sources reporting on the Byzantine military response to Svyatoslav's Balkan campaign conducted in 969-971 present a different picture. The Pechenegs are recorded fighting the Rus on two occasions. The first time was the attack on Kiev in 969, which forced the prince of Rus to withdraw from the Balkans and return to his own country.[699] This sudden attack of the Pechenegs on the Rus capital at the same time when Svyatoslav was in Bulgaria trying to establish his own control leads to an assumption that in this case the Byzantines used the method of provoking others to fight for them, probably by means of payment of large amounts of gold.[700] According to the sources, the Pechenegs then made peace with the Rus and together with the Magyars, became Svyatoslav's allies in his Balkan campaign.[701] Sometime before the end of this military threat, this same tribe apparently broke the alliance with the Rus, as during the Byzantine siege at Dorostolon where Svyatoslav had withdrawn and the prince of Rus was already in hostile relations with the Pechenegs. According to the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, before deciding whether to request for an armistice from the Byzantine Empire, Svyatoslav stated that "...Rus' is far away, and the Pechenegs are hostile to us. So, who will give us aid?"[702] The accuracy of this statement of the prince of Rus can be seen in the battles that followed in which there is no evidence of existence of cavalry

697 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 179-181. See also Shepard, "The Viking Rus and Byzantium", 501.

698 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 71-72. For more details about the battles fought in the Sea of Propontis and Bithynia in *Theophanes Continuatus*, 423.14-426.2. According to Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 221-222, "...only a few escaped the perils of war and reached their homeland". See also *Liudprand of Cremona*, 180-181.

699 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 85.

700 Shepard, "The Viking Rus and Byzantium", 503. Also, Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, 146.

701 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 276. See also Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, 148.

702 For prince Svyatoslav's statement, see *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 89.

units among the Rus forces that fought below the walls of Dorostolon, which should have been provided by his allies, both the Magyars and Pechenegs. One cannot avoid the assumption that before the Byzantines started the siege of Dorostolon they probably managed to win over the Pechenegs and Magyars through payment of gold, which resulted in a significant weakening of the military power of the Rus forces. From a tactical point of view, depriving the Rus of the cavalry units from these two tribes, in fact, led to the superiority of the Byzantine heavy cavalry on the battlefield, which in the final battles under the walls of this city allowed the emperor to be triumphant over his enemy.[703]

Another aspect of this Byzantine military and diplomatic measure is the use of the existing antagonism between states, nations and tribes, but also between different groups or individuals which fought for position and power in a hostile state. This measure does not have a direct military connotation, but the ultimate goal was of a military nature. More precisely, it was intended to induce and compel a certain state or a tribe to militarily intervene against another state or a tribe, or to reduce i.e., to completely paralyze, the military capabilities of the enemy. One such example dates from the beginning of the 10th century during the diplomatic mission of priest Gabriel to the Magyars. Trying to take advantage of the antagonism that the Magyars had towards the Pechenegs, this Byzantine envoy conveyed to his hosts, who were already settled in Pannonia, that "...the emperor declares that you are to go and expel the Pechenegs from their place and settle yourselves there (for in former days you used to be settled there yourselves)".[704] But in the end, this Byzantine diplomatic mission to the Magyars ended in a complete failure, since they replied to Gabriel that "...we are not putting ourselves on the track of the Pechenegs; for we cannot fight them, because their country is great and their people numerous and they are the devil's brats; and do not say this to us again; for we do not like it!"[705]

The flight of the Bulgarian dethroned Emperor Boris and his brother Roman from Constantinople during the uprising of the Kometopouloi and the formation of their state is a second example. There are several moments from this event which indicate that this escape was not accidental and without political connotation, as well as that it could not have been carried out so easily. The first is seen in the events in the Byzantine capital. At the time when civil war was raging throughout the whole of Asia Minor and the Kometopouloi were ravaging the Balkans, it is unlikely that Boris and Roman, who had exceptional political value as Bulgarian heirs to the throne, would have been allowed to move freely around the city. It is much more likely that they, as reported by Yahya,[706] resided in the premises of the Great

703 *Leo the Deacon*, 157-161, 177-199.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 275, 281-293.
704 *DAI*, 8.25-28.
705 Ibid, 8.29-33.
706 Rozen, *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 20.28-21.15.

Palace where, due to their origins, were under surveillance and with a restricted movement. In that context, it is necessary to note that the seat of the imperial court was not a single building, but a complex of buildings protected by high walls which were further strengthened and raised during the time of Nikephoros II Phokas. They, as in the past, were secured by the detachments of the tagma *Noumeroi*, which numbered about 4,000 soldiers in total, formed specifically for that task by the emperor Konstantinos V.[707] This means that the Grand Palace was completely separated from the rest of the city and heavily guarded, indicating that the escape could not have been so easily accomplished, especially without some assistance. The other moment is the successful passage of Boris and Roman through the Thracian regions, which was carried out in time "...when Skleros rebelled against the emperor and their relative Basileios invaded the regions of Thrace".[708] Apparently, the main reason for arrival of the Byzantine emperor in Thrace, was the need to supervise the recruitment process of the new army gathered to fight against Bardas Skleros, as well as the meeting with Bardas Phokas, the new *domestikos of the scholai* of the Byzantine army, who was appointed during these events.[709] With such a large movement of military forces through the Thracian region, as well as with a possible pursuit behind them, it is mostly unlikely that Boris and Roman could have reached the Byzantine border safely without any assistance.

Although it is not confirmed in the sources, the very ease with which this deed was carried out, two years after the start of the military activities of the Kometopouloi in the Balkans, points to the possibility that, in fact, the escape of Boris and Roman from Constantinople was "allowed" and made possible by the Byzantine government itself. In addition, the report that the dethroned Bulgarian emperor Boris, who was the only one of the two brothers who could claim the supreme power in this new state centred in medieval Macedonia which, according to Byzantine belief a century later, was perceived as a restored Bulgarian state, was accidentally killed by an unnamed guard because he wore "Roman" clothes, while his brother Roman, who was actually a eunuch and according to medieval law incapable of ruling, managed to arrive unscathed before the Kometopouloi, further indicates the probability of the existence of some possible political background behind their escape.[710] It seems that this escape represented a kind of an intended Byz-

[707] More details on the strengthening of the walls of the Great Palace by Nikephoros II Phokas and the citizens' perception about their construction in *Leo the Deacon*, 113, and Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 312. On the role and the structure of the tagma *Noumeroi* see John F. Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians: An Administrative, Institutional and Social survey of the Opsikion and Tagmata c.580-900* (Bonn: Dr Rudolf Habelt GMBH, 1984), 263-264.; Warren Treadgold, "Notes on the Numbers and Organization of the Ninth-Century Byzantine Army", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 21 (1980): 277.

[708] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 312.

[709] Ibid, 317.

[710] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 312. For the assumption that the brothers managed to escape independently, see

antine measure aimed, through asserting the right of supreme power to the Bulgarian heirs to the throne, to create a certain discord and start a struggle for supremacy with the Kometopouloi, which would then lead not only to a gradual weakening of their military power, but also to a complete suppression of the "rebellion".[711] Thus disunited, they would not pose as a great threat to the Byzantine provinces in the Balkans, emptied of military forces, and after the calming of the situation in Asia Minor, they could be much more easily subjugated by the Byzantine army which would be sent to pacify the situation in this region.

Another example of exploitation of antagonism between individuals in a foreign state, similar to that of Boris and Roman, are the events that took place between Gavril Radomir and Jovan Vladislav which led to the murder of Gavril, who ruled the Samuil's State after the death of his father, and the enthronement of Jovan Vladislav, who was a pretender for the throne. According to the Priest of Diocleia, Emperor Basileios II sent a letter to Radomir's relative and asked "...why do you not revenge your father's blood? Take from me as much gold and silver as you yourself think you need, be with us in peace and take the state of tzar Samuil, who killed your father, his brother, so if you prevail, kill his son Radomir who now rules the state".[712] Skylitzes confirms this event and reports that Jovan Vladislav managed to inform the Byzantine emperor by letter that "... Gavril had been slain by him at Peteriskon and that plenary power had been passed to him".[713]

The importance of the antagonism for the Byzantine government as one of the aspects of "provoke and observe" policy is indicated by its incorporation in the pages of *De Administrando Imperio*, although it is noted that this measure was most often applied together with historical facts which had the task to additionally strengthen the effect of the existing antagonism.[714]

Military deterrence: show of force and intimidation

At the moment when all political solutions intended to prevent the imminent enemy aggression were exhausted, then the Byzantine government started with prepara-

Antoljak, *Srednovekovna Makedonija* Tom I, 355-356.; Boškoski, *Velikanite*, 57-59.; Златарски, *Истории*, 657.; Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-slayer*, 13, states that the Byzantines "allowed" Boris and Roman to escape, but does not elaborate his assumption further.

711 This process of gradual suppression of the rebellion is observed by Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 387-389, when he reports on Petar Delyan's rebellion.

712 *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 127.

713 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 334.

714 Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 100-101.

tions for war. But apart from waging a pitch battle on the battlefield, another type of utilization of the deployed military forces was through implementation of the deterrence method: show of military force and intimidation of the enemy.[715] Although this method was of a military nature, nevertheless, the ultimate goal was political, more precisely, it was supposed to stop the immediate enemy aggression i.e., to force the adversary to surrender and submit to the authority of the Byzantine emperor or, on the other hand, to achieve some other intended interest without causing any bloodshed within the ranks of the military forces. In that context, in my opinion, it can be concluded that when used in this way, the armed forces could rightly be seen as a diplomatic tool. The utilization of the imperial army in this manner is clearly witnessed in the military manuals and in order for it to succeed, it required the implementation of the "...times and places, surprises and various tricks to outwit the enemy with the idea of achieving its objectives even without actual fighting".[716] However, what is noted in the sources is that, in addition to the practical use of this method through actual deployment of military forces on the field, it was known to be used by the Byzantine government in cooperation with diplomacy, but also as an argument in diplomatic correspondence and during negotiations. There are several examples in the sources of the use of this method.

The Byzantine-Bulgarian war of 863 is one such example. The extremely short duration of this Byzantine campaign, which ended without bloodshed, as well as its absence in most of the sources, indicates that the goal was not a military confrontation and conquest of Bulgaria. Although during this campaign the largest part of the Bulgarian army was engaged in Pannonia against the Moravian ruler Rostislav, while in the country itself there was famine among the population, nevertheless, the political situation on the Byzantine eastern border and the possibility of a new attack by the Arabs, despite the death of the emir of Melitene, as well as the difficult terrain for warfare, did not allow the execution of a long-term military campaign of the Byzantine army. The testimony presented in the *Life of St. Ignatios* by Niketas of Paphlagonia, that the Bulgarians laid down their arms because they were "...charmed by the emperor's bribes..."[717], as well Pseudo-Symeon's, that the Bulgarians "...were defeated as if hit by lightning...and prematurely gave up the victory without battles and struggles...",[718] in a way indicate that from its very beginning the goal of this campaign was not conquest, but a show of Byzantine military force.

[715] For a comprehensive analysis of fear and intimidation from a military perspective, see Łukasz Różycki, *Battlefield Emotions in Late Antiquity. A Study of Fear and Motivation in Roman Military Treaties* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

[716] *Das Strategikon*, II.1.11-15.

[717] Nicetas David, *The Life of Patriarch Ignatius*, tr. by Andrew Smithies and notes by John M. Duffy (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2013), 58.18-20.

[718] *Symeon Magister*, 665.14-15.

This military step, most likely, represented an integral part of the conducted diplomatic measures which are superficially evidenced in the *Life of St. Ignatios*, supposed to help the Byzantine Empire in achieving the desired political goal, the baptism of the Bulgars.

The fact that the Byzantines knew how to use the method of intimidation as a political argument in their diplomatic correspondence is indicated by the letter sent by the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos to Simeon after the defeat which the Byzantine army suffered at Acheloos in 917.[719] This method was used again by Nikolaos Mystikos between 919 and 921 when, in an attempt to intimidate the Bulgarian emperor and thereby convince him to sit at the negotiating table, he wrote various misinformation in his letters to Simeon, for instance formation of a strong anti-Bulgarian coalition composed of Rus, Alans, Pechenegs and Magyars,[720] or military preparations of the imperial army by order of the Byzantine emperor, directed against the Bulgarians.[721] That this was in some way an established diplomatic practice is evidenced by the event which occurred during the second mission of Luidprand of Cremona to Constantinople, who reports how Nikephoros II Phokas tried to intimidate him by declaring the military readiness and might of the Byzantine army and its naval forces, if he would make an attack on the territories of his sovereign Otto I in the future.[722]

Another example which reports on the practical application of this method, but through deployment of military forces on the field, is from the time when Nikephoros II Phokas was on the Byzantine throne, who in 967 conducted a military campaign in Bulgaria's border regions. As a result of the short duration of this campaign and the results that came out of it i.e., several destroyed border fortresses, it can be easily assumed that this was not a military campaign aimed at conquering Bulgaria, but a demonstration of Byzantine military force with a sole purpose to intimidate the enemy.

The impression which can be obtained from the source material is that after the suppression of Bardas Phokas' rebellion, the emperor Basileios II, in an attempt to subjugate Samuil, waged a protracted, merciless, exhausting and a bloody war. Despite this picture which is presented by the chroniclers of this period, they all unequivocally point to the fact that in achieving his goal, apart from various strategies and tactics that were used by the Byzantine emperor, other means e.g., persuasion and intimidation, as well diplomacy, also played a fundamental role. During the first few years after the civil war, the Byzantine emperor did not take offensive military campaigns. Instead, he only acted defensively. As a result of the heavy losses in the ranks of the army during the last civil

719 Nicholas, *Letters*, 9.121-141
720 Ibid, 23.18-21, 23.68-70.
721 Ibid, 31.89-92.
722 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 246.

war, the first step taken by the Byzantine Empire was, actually, the gradual restoration of the military power of the *themata* armies in the Balkan Peninsula, which due to the needs of the central government in the fight against Bardas Phokas, apparently, were previously largely emptied of soldiers.

While the imperial forces before the battle of Spercheios acted exclusively defensively in an attempt to prevent incursions of Samuil's army and stop his territorial expansion at the expense of the Byzantine Empire, after this victory, instead of border military confrontations, they began to act more offensively, shifting the fighting deep into enemy territory. This situation is reported by Yahya of Antioch, according to whom, immediately after the termination of the negotiations, Nikephoros Ouranus penetrated deep into Samuil's State, where he looted and burned for three whole months without anyone opposing him. Immediately afterwards he retreated back to Constantinople.[723] The manner in which this military campaign was carried out without conquering a certain territory, as well as its similarity with the campaign which Nikephoros II Phokas conducted against Petar, destroying a large number of fortresses on the Bulgarian border, in fact, indicates that it was a kind of show of military force, a method of intimidation which, it seems, was supposed to put pressure on the enemy to accept the offered Byzantine conditions or to continue the previously interrupted negotiations.[724] And the next incursion into Samuil's State, conducted personally by Emperor Basileios II in the area of Serdica, in which he "... destroyed a large number of fortresses...and then returned to Mosynoupolis..."[725], points to the same fact. The course of this Byzantine campaign itself, as well as the events that preceded it, actually allow us to assume that this campaign of the Byzantine emperor was more aimed at terrifying the Kometopoulos as much as possible and instilling fear into the ranks of his nobles and subjects, indicating to them through the trail of destruction and pillage to the consequences that awaited them if they continued to resist, rather than to finally conquer regions of the Balkans which were under Samuil's authority.

Additional factor which ensured success of the Byzantine Empire against Samuil's State was the ability of Emperor Basileios II to strike fear into all those who tried to defy him. For this purpose, throughout his warfare with Samuil and his successors he used two different methods of intimidation. One was show of Byzantine military force in the field, while the other were the occasional outbursts of extreme brutality. Many of the Byzantine military campaigns witnessed in the sources, and not only during the reign of Basileios II, were in fact a show of force. This type of warfare, without waging at least one

723 Rozen, *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica*, 34.22-26.
724 Gjalevski, "Zaplašuvanjeto kako diplomatsko sredstvo", 45-54.
725 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 326.; Zonarae, *Epitome Historiarum*, 118.

major battle and territorial gain, except for inflicting maximum possible damage on enemy's economic and other material infrastructure shown through killing of population, occasional destruction of fortified settlements, as well as complete devastation and looting of the surroundings, the Byzantine Empire conducted against Samuil on several occasions.[726] Even though sometimes during these military campaigns there were some minor skirmishes, what was actually intended to be achieved through this trail of destruction, was a general spread of fear and panic not only among the local population and the elite, but also within the ranks of the enemy's military forces. This fear established among the soldiers would then have an effect on their military capability and performance on the assigned tasks in the battlefield.

As for the Byzantine military campaign which was carried out immediately after the death of Samuil, although at first it seems that the emperor conducted it with the intention of waging war, Skylitzes's report that it was taken hastily during the winter and that nothing was destroyed except Gavril Radomir's palace, an act which seems to have had more political than military motive (exerting additional political pressure on the new ruler), indicates that the purpose of this campaign was more of a show of Byzantine military force than raiding or conquest of enemy territory.[727] Apparently, the cities which were temporarily conquered by Basileios II, in fact represented a kind of exploitation of the opportunity which was presented to him due to the absence of any resistance on the part of the opponent. In that context, it is probably necessary to discuss Skylitzes' testimony about Gavril's offer for submission to the Byzantine emperor.[728] More precisely, this step of the new ruler seems to have been a result of the instability of his power as a consequence of the weak authority he had over the nobles, as well as of the inadequate strength of the military forces which he commanded at that moment and did not allow him to openly oppose the Byzantine army on the battlefield.

In his *Synopsis Historion*, Skylitzes presents a vivid picture of the effect which the method of *show of force* and intimidation presumably had on the enemy. Although the incident appears to be propaganda by the author himself, it nevertheless captures to some extent the reaction which was desired to be achieved in the ranks of the enemy's army. According to Skylitzes' report, after Basileios II found out about the ambush of his military forces by Jovan Vladislav, the last ruler of Samuil's State, he personally went to

[726] Such, for example, was the military campaign of Nikephoros Ouranus, or the campaigns of Emperor Basileios II during 999, 1002 and 1014. However, this type of military campaigns were also conducted by the Byzantine Empire in the past. See *Theophanes*, 446-447.; *Symeon Magister*, 665.11-666.7.; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 412.11-22.

[727] Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil*, 26.

[728] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 334.

prevent this plan. Learning about the intention of the emperor, Jovan's spies arrived at their military camp and "...in great fear and filled it with anxiety and distress, shouting nothing else but: bezeite ho tzesar".[729]

This method used by Basileios II was further reinforced by another much more brutal means which Skylitzes witnesses in his Chronicle: blinding of prisoners of war. He reports that the Byzantine emperor used this cruel act several times. First against Samuil after the battle at Belasitza and then against Jovan Vladislav at Ostrovos, Soskos and Pelagonia.[730] According to the report of Yahya of Antioch, Basileios II also used this means of intimidation against the rebellious Iberians whose territory was handed over to him by the *kouropalates* David.[731] Although the event of Samuil's death appears to be a kind of authorial construction, it indicates the effect that this cruel act probably had on the enemy.[732] However, no matter how brutal and barbaric this method was, it must be noted that the reason for its use was of a political and ideological nature. According to the Byzantine belief, this act represented a legal and humane punishment, a kind of Christian charity given by the emperor, used only against those who were considered to be his subjects (the population in the Empire itself and the states dependent on it i.e., client states) but tried to defy his will or to usurp his legitimate authority.[733] It was never used against prisoners

729 Ibid, 337.

730 For more details about the blinding of war prisoners by Basileios II in Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 331, 335, 338. Regarding the blinding of 15,000 soldiers at Belasitza, the event is most likely a myth, because I agree with the opinions of Mark Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1205* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 388.; Anthony Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood. The Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 121–122.; Jonathan Harris, *The Lost World of Byzantium* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2015), 158, that it would destroy the military power of Samuil's state for further successful defence against Byzantine attacks. Hupchick, *The Bulgarian-Byzantine wars*, 289, he also doubts the number of blinded soldiers at Belasitza. The real number, if the event is real, would be significantly lower, equal to the amount of other blinding's carried out by Basileios II. See also Catherine Holmes, "Basil II the Bulgar-Slayer and the Blinding of 15,000 Bulgarians in 1014: Mutilation and Prisoners of War in the Middle Ages", in *How Fighting Ends: A History of Surrender*, ed. Holger Afflerbach and Hew Strachan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 85–95.; Panov, *The Blinded State*, 98-100. For an analysis of the blinding procedure and the Byzantine imperial propaganda see Peter Schreiner, "Die vermeintliche blendung. Zu den ereignissen von Kleidion im jahr 1014", in *South-Eastern Europe in the Second Half of 10th – the Beginning of the 11th Centuries: History and Culture*, ed. Vasil Gjuzelev and Georgi N. Nikolov (Sofia: BAS, 2015), 170-187.

731 For the campaign of Basileios II against George of Abasgia, see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 346. On the blinding of the Iberian captives Holmes, *Basil II*, 529.

732 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 331.

733 That the act of blinding in the Byzantine Empire was used against political opponents, usurpers and outlaws from the supreme power see Schreiner, "Die vermeintliche blendung", 175-177.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 132, 303, 304, 313.; Bozhilov, *Vizantiiskiiat Sviat*, 395.; Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 325. For the frequent use of this brutal means by Basileios II see Holmes, *Basil II*, 529.; Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil*, 85.

of war from states, nations and tribes, which the Byzantine government did not consider its' subjects.[734] Basileios II's use of this method of intimidation points to the fact that the Byzantine perception of Samuil had not fundamentally changed over the years, and that for him the Kometopoulos and his subjects were "outlaws" from the legitimate authority in Constantinople from the very beginning, who, if they did not wilfully submitted to his will, were to be duly punished for their defiance.

The Byzantine offensive strategy

From the middle of the 10th until the beginning of 11th century, certain change can be observed in the strategic behaviour of the Byzantine Empire in the Balkans. Instead of a defensive stance, it increasingly turned into a formidable offensive posture where military operations were transferred on a foreign, hostile, territory. Although this offensive footing of the Byzantine army can be observed before i.e., in the middle of the 9th century against prince Boris, or at the end of the same century against Simeon, as well as during the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas, nevertheless, it was still more of a *show of force*, since the activities of the imperial army were limited only to the border regions. In contrast to this strategy, Ioannes I Tzimiskes and Basileios II penetrated deep into enemy's territory where they undertook many military campaigns, waged pitched battles and conducted numerous sieges of cities and fortresses. This change was mainly a consequence of the military success on the eastern border against the Arabs, which allowed for a transfer of significant human resources (army units) to the Balkans, but also of the warlike characters of the emperors who were on the Byzantine throne, the professionalism and experience of the Byzantine army, and the demographic and economic revival of the Byzantine Empire. Although the source material reports that the military success was achieved through constant warfare and fighting pitched battles, the stance of the imperial army was not as offensive and aggressive.[735] *The Anonymous Book of Tactics* (Ἀνονύμου Βιβλίον τακτικόν), translated under the title "Organization of Campaign and Tactics", a military manual compiled in late 10th century, probably during the reign of Basileios II, the subject of which is mostly the Balkan front, is full of defensive precautionary advice in case the military forces were campaigning deep into enemy territory. However, Skylitzes, the main source for the reign of Basileios II, indicates that in addition to waging skirmishes

[734] These prisoners were mostly exchanged. See Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 245-246.; Holmes, "Basil II the Bulgar-Slayer", 87-88.

[735] Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 415-418, presents the basic methods of the Byzantine military strategy.

and battles, during his campaigns he also used diplomatic measures in an attempt to subdue his opponent.

There were several key factors for the use of diplomatic means during these offensive campaigns. The first was the terrain of warfare, the second its configuration. Interspersed with high mountains, hilly regions with narrow valleys and passes between them, in contrast to the wide eastern plains of Syria, any prolonged stay in the Balkan regions which were not under the authority of the emperor, posed an extreme danger for the security of the Byzantine army. A typical example of how dangerous it was to conduct military campaign in such a difficult and unsuitable terrain is the campaign of Nikephoros I Genikos against the Bulgarians in 811, where due to poor judgment and strategy, the Byzantines managed to get themselves into a position to be surrounded and disastrously defeated in the subsequent attack, losing in the process most of the military forces, all of them probably experienced and professional soldiers. That is why the military campaign of Michael III against Boris in 863, as well as that of Nikephoros II Phokas in 968, were aimed and limited only to the Thracian border regions. The Byzantine *strategoi* were well aware of the uncertainty which followed if they went unprepared deep into the enemy's mountainous regions where the terrain was not suitable for conventional warfare, and the ease with which the enemy could surround the Byzantine army on campaign. This is clearly seen in the reaction of the *strategoi* and the *taxiarchs*, as well as in their displeasure, towards the proposal of Ioannes I Tzimiskes to penetrate deep into enemy territory. According to Leo the Deacon, at the first moment they named such an idea of the emperor as "...ill-timed recklessness and purposeless rashness verging on senseless insanity".[736]

The Anonymous Book of Tactics indicates that this attitude of the Byzantine military commanders was not just a momentary episode of caution, but a tactical position which arose from the Byzantine strategic concept of warfare. In this manual, written in the late 10th century, various strategies, tactics and other art of warfare are presented, as well as other practical advices needed to successfully lead a military campaign. Special emphasis is put on the campaigns which took place through difficult mountainous terrain in the Balkans, particularly in the cases in which the emperor participated and also involved a large army. All tactical instructions, various manoeuvres and other practical guidelines in the manual are addressed directly to the Byzantine Emperor. They are given as a kind of advice by his most reliable adviser who is suggesting how the campaign should proceed. From the style of the author, it is clear that the emperor is the one who gives the orders, but who has still much to learn, a situation in which, according to the

[736] *Leo the Deacon*, 177-179.

scholars, the young emperor Basileios II found himself at the beginning of his reign.[737]

The first seven chapters of *The Anonymous Book of Tactics* include instructions of how to set up and organize a military camp depending on the structure of the troops and the configuration of surrounding area, and how to secure it against sudden attacks from the enemy. The first, and also the largest, chapter refers exclusively on the matter of setting up the camp and its internal organization.[738] Chapters nine to thirteen relate to the safety of the imperial army in the camp, but also outside it. The author suggests how to best organize the departure of the imperial army from the camp, as well as in which formation to proceed during the march through an enemy territory depending on the terrain, but also how the army should protect itself against sudden enemy attacks during these operations. Several chapters in the text refer to the crossing of defiles, bridges and rivers, as well as to the army's movement through narrow mountain passes deep into enemy territory. They contain guidelines on how and in which formation the commander can most safely cross deep rivers, mountain passes and narrow canyons. Furthermore, the author instructs how to avoid ambushes laid by the enemy at these places, or how to capture it if they were previously occupied by him. The eighteenth chapter of this manual refers to the importance of having experienced guides who know the terrain well, spies, as well as scouts, who should be sent in the surrounding country "...to capture men for the purpose of obtaining accurate information about the plans of the enemy".[739] An important part of this manual, from the twenty-first to the twenty-seventh chapter, are the advices for successful implementation of sieges on enemy outposts, forts and cities, for safety of the imperial army during siege, as well as for the tactics which should be used against an enemy counterattack, but also while fighting on the walls besieged by the Byzantines. In the last five chapters the author refers to various logistical issues which may arise before and during the campaign and gives directions how to solve these.

What is important, and strikingly obvious in this manual, is that it shows the same Byzantine view towards warfare which also exists in other military manuals of the same period, as well as in those from the previous centuries. Although the narrative itself

[737] Dragan Gjalevski, "Byzantine military strategy in the Balkans (976-1018)", *Glasnik* 62, no.1 (2018): 47-56.; Kirił Marinow, "Mountain Warfare in the Byzantine-Bulgarian Military Struggles, the end of 10th - the beginning of 11th Century. Between theory and practice (An Outline)", in *South-Eastern Europe in the Second Half of 10th – the Beginning of the 11th Centuries: History and Culture*, ed. Vasil Giuzelev and Georgi N. Nikolov (Sofia: BAS, 2015), 95-107.

[738] In his work, the author also included several sketches that seem to show an ideal, not a real, picture of a Byzantine military camp in the field, because the Byzantines built military camps from earth and other perishable materials, of which no significant archaeological traces remain today, so what they really looked like is unknown.

[739] *Campaign organization and tactics*, 18.18-19.

suggests that the Byzantine Empire was on the offensive and was waging war in the land of the enemy, yet the author gives more attention to the details of the tactics, the manoeuvres and various other skills which would save the lives of the imperial troops during battles, sieges, or while marching in enemy's territory, than to those that could lead to complete military annihilation of the enemy.[740] As in the military manuals from the past, the author here also advises to avoid any military confrontations in the field where the enemy had a tactical advantage, because if "...you are unable to use your hand, your horse, and your weapons, while the enemy is able to do so, then the danger is obvious".[741] Such caution before initiating a pitch battle, to which every military commander should strictly uphold, is emphasized several times in the text, when the imperial army is described passing through mountain passages and narrow defiles,[742] but also during sieges of enemy strongholds.[743]

The author of this military manual advises extreme caution on behalf of the *strategos* for the safety of his army during offensive campaigns, when crossing narrow mountainous terrain, such as the ones that can be found in the Balkan Peninsula. According to him, a few days before the campaign began, deep in enemy territory "...the guides, spies and hussars should be send to examine all the roads carefully and to find out if they are held by the enemy".[744] The army was supposed to have experienced scouts in its ranks, but not "...simply men who know the roads, for the lowliest peasant can do that, but men who, in addition to knowing the roads, are able to conduct the army through the mountain passes, who can plan ahead, and who know the proper distances for the campsites, locations whish are suitable...so the camp will not find itself in dire straits. They should know the topography of the enemy territory in detail, so they can lead the army into it to plunder and take captives".[745] When "...the army [will found itself] in hostile territory...in the case of narrow passage, units of infantry should be send out ahead to occupy it securely..." [746], for if this was not done, there was a possibility, at the moment when the main body of the expeditionary force was crossing the narrow passage, to fall into an enemy trap.[747] In case the pass was occupied by the enemy then the author advised to "...not get close to that place and certainly not send the army recklessly and at great risk through another difficult road which is occupied by the enemy...", but to find another "...unobstructed pass,

740 One such offensive tactics, although a bit generalized, is presented by the author in the twenty-fifth chapter.
741 *Campaign organization and tactics*, 20.12-14.
742 Ibid, 13.4-8, 19.7-10.
743 Ibid, 21.43-50, 25.24-26.
744 Ibid, 19.4-7.
745 Ibid, 18.3-15.
746 Ibid, 14.4-10.
747 Ibid, 19.7-10.

even if that road happens to be three or four days distant".[748] An army on campaign should not contain too many non-combatants or too much baggage, because of the possibility of slowing down the military march and an enemy ambush in the "...rugged, wooden mountain passes with very narrow road".[749] It was extremely important to keep the supply lines open, because if these were interrupted, the military forces would be deprived of food, forage, weapons and other materials necessary for the successful continuation of the campaign. This was extremely important, because unlike the land of the Arabs, in the Balkans "...there is a total lack of [all] necessities, especially of barley".[750]

Main reason why the author of the *Anonymous Book of Tactics* advised the Byzantine commanders to exercise extreme caution originates from the extremely unfavourable geographical configuration of the Balkan Peninsula, which consisted of high mountains intersected by narrow passes and gorges, ideal for waging guerrilla warfare, setting ambushes and easily defending significant strategic locations with very few soldiers. In fact, the care given in the manuals for a safe passage of mountain passes or narrow gorges was mainly an experience from the past. These two main geographical factors, gorges and narrow passes between valleys, were an excellent place for an ambush which could lead to a catastrophic defeat and complete destruction of the military forces.[751] This has happened to Emperor Nikephoros I Genikos in 811 during his Bulgarian campaign where he lost his life, as well as to Basileios II in 986 at Trajan's Gate. The success of Ioannes I Tzimiskes in the campaign of 970 was mainly a result of the consistent implementation of the Byzantine principles of passage through mountainous terrain: sending scouts and capturing strategically important places.[752] Another weak point in conducting a military campaign was the long sieges of enemy strongholds, as well as a protracted warfare in enemy territory. In both cases there was a high possibility of ambush by the enemy or disruption of supply lines. The lack of necessary products for the continuation of the campaign would have led to exposure of the entire army to danger as a result of the reduced combat efficiency, especially among the cavalry detachments which could carry only twenty-four days' supply of forage.[753]

748 Ibid, 20.3-19.

749 Ibid, 15.3-9.

750 Ibid, 21.18-30.

751 For more details see Kiril Marinov, "Kak treba da se vodiat planinski strazheniia. Preporăki v niakoi vizantiiski i antichni strategikoni", *Bulgaria Medievalis* 4-5 (2013-2014): 363-381.; Kiril Marinov, "Preminavaneto na planinskite prohodi spored vizantiiskite i niakoi antichni traktati za voennoto izkustvo", in *Bălgarsko srednovekovie: obshtestvo, vlast, istoriia. Sbornik v chest na prof. d-r Miliiana Kaimakamova*, säs. Georgi N. Nikolov i Angel Nikolov (Sofia: UI "Sv. Kliment Ohridski", 2013), 205–220.

752 *Leo the Deacon*, 179.

753 *Campaign Organization and Tactics*, 21.22.

All these problems and dangers were present both in the campaign of Ioannes I Tzimiskes north of the Thracian plain, and in all of the campaigns of Basileios II deep into Samuil's State after the victory at Spercheios. Severing Svyatoslav's alliance with the Magyars and Pechenegs is a testimonial to the diplomatic measures undertaken by Ioannes I Tzimiskes before the start of his military campaign. After the victory at Preslav, Leo the Deacon reports that the Byzantine emperor, through the Rus prisoners which he freed, offered Svyatoslav the opportunity for a truce if he surrendered immediately.[754] This was not only due to the position of strength which the Byzantine Empire held at the time, but also to avoid significant human losses which would occur in a prolonged campaign or siege of a city, or in a possible catastrophic defeat on the battlefield. Certain ideological viewpoints should also be taken into account. The Byzantine society, or rather its elite, glorified the victory over the enemy if it was accomplished without shedding of "Roman blood". Ioannes I Tzimiskes's quick acceptance of Svyatoslav's initiative for a cessation of hostilities and signing a peace treaty stems from the same reasons.[755]

The same aspect of extremely careful warfare can be seen in Basileios II's campaigns against Samuil from the beginning of the second millennium. But in this case, instead in Bulgaria, the military operations were concentrated on the territory of medieval Macedonia, which is more specific and more difficult for conducting a protracted war. Unlike Haimos, i.e., Stara planina, which is the only mountain that separates the Thracian lowland from the Danube River, the territory of medieval Macedonia consists of many mountains and passes, as well as numerous smaller valleys (an exception is the Pelagonian plain) with narrow gorges between these, which prevents the safe passage of a larger army. This region of the Balkans was suitable for conducting asymmetric guerrilla warfare. Unlike Bulgaria, throughout the regions of medieval Macedonia there was an even greater possibility of interruption of communications and supply lines as a result of the configuration of the terrain, as well as for setting of ambushes by the enemy, of which, according to the sources, Emperor Basileios II was very aware.[756]

In his *Chronographia*, Michael Psellos clearly notes that Basileios II, despite the exceptional military knowledge and skills he acquired and possessed for warfare, actually, exhibited more cunning.[757] The cunning which Psellos' writes about probably does not only mean various strategic and tactical skills which the Byzantine military manuals advise to be used during battle. This can also be seen in the battles he waged against Samuil deep into his territory. Although he conducted numerous sieges, skirmishes and battles,

754 *Leo the Deacon*, 183.
755 See Skylitzes, *A Synopsis*, 326, and *Theophanes*, 617.
756 Gjalevski, "Byzantine military strategy", 54–56.
757 *Michaelis Pselli*, I.33.1-4.

what can be concluded from Skylitzes' *Synopsis Historion* is that Emperor Basileios II used a wide range of traditional diplomatic means in his fight with the Kometopoulos: from direct negotiations with an enemy leader or other leading figure in the opposing camp, through alliances with neighbouring peoples, bribes, all the way to generous offers of imperial aulic titles to leaders of the enemy strongholds which came along with significant monetary allowance and prestige.

The use of diplomatic measures by the Byzantine emperors before and during military campaigns against their enemies in the Balkans in the period between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century is more than evident. In fact, avoiding direct confrontation on the battlefield and using other means to resolve military conflicts has been an essential element of the Byzantine strategy since the late 6th century. Almost all military manuals advise in one way or another that it is "...safer and more advantageous to overcome the enemy by planning and generalship than by sheer force; in the one case the results are achieved without loss to oneself, while in the other some price has to be paid".[758] The complex and at times problematic geopolitical situation, with resources which did not allow simultaneous warfare on two fronts, as well as the possibility of greater human losses during battles, is the reason why the Byzantines relied so much on diplomacy and easily accepted the peace initiatives proposed by the enemy.

[758] *Das Strategikon*, VIII.1.7.

THE BYZANTINE ART OF DIPLOMACY

"When letters were sent to and from the strategoi, and the imperial protonotarioi, and those in the villages, provinces and cities, and also indeed letter to and from archons of the foreign nations, these too were read by him and immediately his judgement determined what needed to be done about matters in the east and what about matters in the west, and generally he went over these affairs as if he had wings, receiving embassies, sending instructions to officials, rectifying changes which has been made in haste"

Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, VI.17

According to certain theories, concepts and ideas which have been presented by scholars in relation to diplomacy, it is characterized as a "master institution"[759] or, even more prosaically, as an "engine room" of international relations.[760] Today, it is seen as an occupation which, like medicine or other professions, has a status which reflects the ignorance of those outside it of the knowledge and skills required to practice it. Unlike other professions which have input from science, professional diplomacy is learned by practicing the art, through apprenticeship.[761] It is an integral part of the research of various scholars studying foreign policy and international relations. But despite this, there is an opinion in the academic world that diplomacy is particularly resistant to theoretical study.[762] It is pointed out that no field in politics has a greater gap between experience and theory as there is in diplomatic statecraft.[763] In fact, the role which diplomacy has, as part of statecraft, is to support and assist foreign policies, while conducting official affairs with other foreign states, and to focus on the implementation of specific activities

[759] Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978), 113.
[760] Raymond Cohen, "Putting Diplomatic Studies on the Map," *Diplomatic Studies Programme Newsletter*, Leicester University, 4 May 1998.
[761] John W. Burton, *Systems, States, Diplomacy and Rules* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 206.
[762] James Der Derian, "Mediating Estrangement: A Theory for Diplomacy", *Review of International Studies* 13 (1987): 91.
[763] Barry H. Steiner, "Diplomacy and international Theory", *Review of International Studies* 30/4 (2004): 493.

which are needed to improve the relations. According to a statement of Edmund Burke, quoted by Sir Ernest Satow, diplomacy is "...the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between governments of independent states".[764] The Oxford English Dictionary defines this aspect of statecraft as political art of conducting "international relations through negotiation".[765] In the encyclopaedia *Britannica* it is explained as an "established method of influencing the decisions and behaviour of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiation, and other measures short of war or violence".[766] Diplomacy is also characterized as "negotiations between political entities which acknowledge each other's independence"[767] i.e., as an activity of "peaceful conduct of relations amongst political entities, their principals and accredited agents".[768] These few quotes about the role which diplomacy has today, in fact, limit and frame its implementation in only one segment of international relations, namely, as art of conducting negotiations between states, presenting it as a method and not as an institution of international society,[769] leaving all other activities of the state with other polities in the sphere of what is today understood by the term foreign policy.

Although the prevailing opinion is that as an integral part of international relations, diplomacy started its establishment in the middle of the 15th century[770] and certainly towards the end of the 17th century, nevertheless, within the field of modern research, the foreign relations which were conducted and existed between the states of the ancient and medieval period are also covered. In that context, the Byzantine Empire is repeatedly mentioned by scholars as an exception which used diplomacy at a higher level than any other political entities from that period of history. Their most frequent statement is that the Byzantine diplomacy was highly successful and had a more lasting influence in this sphere of international relations than other medieval states, and that its traditions had passed through Venice to Western Europe.[771] Furthermore, the lasting legacy left by the Byzantine diplomacy is pointed out, which is most easily discernible by the importance which is still attached to the ceremonial and protocol in the diplomatic conduct.[772] It is

764 For Edmund Burke's quote see Charles W. Freeman Jr., *The Diplomat's Dictionary* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1993), 100.

765 Christer Jöhnsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy* (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3.

766 https://www.britannica.com/topic/diplomacy (seen at 16.11.2021)

767 Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 82.

768 Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy. Its evolution, theory and administration. Second edition* (London/New York: Routledge, 2011), 1.

769 About diplomacy as an institution see Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 25-28.

770 Jeremy Black, *A History of Diplomacy* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2010), 43-46.

771 Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 11.

772 *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice*, ed. Jan Melissen (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Publishers Ltd, 1999),

also emphasized that as a result of the evident development of diplomatic techniques and means, as well as of the immensely long reach and persistence of the Byzantine diplomacy, a conclusion was put forth by scholars that it should be considered as a predecessor of the modern system to that extent that its predecessors could not be.[773]

The question what should, in essence, be encompassed by the term Byzantine diplomacy was posed by scholars several decades ago, first time at the XII International Byzantine Congress which was held in Ohrid in 1963, while the second time at the XXIV Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies in Cambridge, in 1990. The disagreements in relation to this issue in the Byzantine studies moved towards the course of whether the essence of diplomacy is the same as that of the international relations of a state, or should these be seen separately?[774] It was also pointed out that, basically, foreign policy and international relations are not the same as Byzantine diplomacy, which should study the "technique of foreign relations".[775] In fact, the emphasis should have been placed not on "what" was happening but on "how" it was happening, as suggested by one scholar. Furthermore, it was emphasized that it was very easy to confuse "what" with "how", and even to replace "what" with "how" i.e., to confuse the means by which international relations were conducted with the relations themselves and with the result which arose from these, which would then lead to an intrusion into the sphere of foreign policy.[776] Despite the fact that these questions raised and thoughts expressed are more than valid, nevertheless, these are stated keeping in mind the modern viewpoint of diplomacy and the level of development which exists today in this segment of statecraft, and allows for a more detailed systematization of the processes, methods and the techniques which comprise it, as well as their appropriate analysis. Actually, it is necessary to point out that our modern understanding of diplomacy, presented not only as an institution of international society, but also as state organization with a ministry and separate building, with officials who have undergone specialized training to perform tasks from international relations through application of certain methods, techniques and practices, as well as with its own equipment and budget, was non-existent until the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century.[777] But this does not mean that certain segments which compose this contemporary definition were not observed in the past as well, for instance the assigning of a task to some state structure (or establishing a new state office specifically for that

XVIII.; Harold Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* (Leicester: University of Leicester, 2001), 25.

773 Hamilton and Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy*, 19.

774 Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy", 6.

775 *Actes du XII Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines, Ochride 10-16 Septembre 1963, Tome I* (Nendeln: Klaus Reprint, 1978), 313, 318.

776 Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy", 6.

777 Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 25-26.

purpose) to manage relations with foreigners and with their diplomatic representatives, or for the envoys to possess a set of skills and even to perform some kind of training before it was sent to carry out certain mission.

Hence, taking into account the period which is subject of study i.e., the Middle Ages and the Byzantine Empire, in which the organization of the states and their structures in charge of this sphere of statecraft, as well as the international relations themselves, did not possess the contemporary complexity and sophistication, and were not even familiar with the concept of diplomacy, in an attempt to explain its principles, processes and means, the research and analysis of the Byzantine diplomacy in the Balkans in the period from the middle of the 9th until the beginning of 11th century, will encompass much more than the most general modern meaning of diplomacy as the method of direct negotiations between states, examining at the same time some of the modern constituent elements which characterize it and can be detected in its basic, rudimentary form.

Byzantine Diplomacy: Features and Structure

"Perhaps this undertaking seemed superfluous to others who do not have as great a concern for what is necessary, but it is particularly dear to us and highly desirable and more relevant than anything else because through praiseworthy ceremonial the imperial rule appears more beautiful and acquires more nobility and so is a cause of wonder to both foreigners and our own people"

Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies*, prooimion

As stated in the introduction of this monograph, in order for the analysis to be as relevant, thorough and methodological as possible, diplomacy should be perceived not only as part of statecraft, but also as a type of institution of international society which is composed of various political entities, understood as a relatively stable set of social practices consisting of easily recognizable roles combined with basic norms, a set of rules and conventions that define appropriate behaviour, which is structuring and regulating relations between participants in this political space. This type of institutions often forms organizations or groups of individuals, which implement and accomplish the collective tasks and objectives which are set. Such is the case with diplomacy. Although the terms "institution" and "organization" can be and are used interchangeably by scholars, nevertheless, the organization which we associate with diplomacy today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with all its officials and diplomatic corps, is of recent origin. In fact, scholars are emphasizing that at the end of the 17th century, states and other polities did not possess a specific organization or group of people in their structure incharged for dealing with matters of foreign policy and international relations.

In regards to the Byzantine Empire, the sources indicate that it was a small step away from their formation. Namely, apart from the emperor, who held the imperial office (βασιλεία) and the supreme power in the state, and was the only one authorized to manage foreign affairs, for that purpose the Byzantine government also appointed an already existing state office, that of the *magister officiorum*, a high imperial official from the late antique period who performed this assignment from the end of the 5th century until its

abolishment in the 8th century,[778] or that of his successor, the *logothetes tou dromou*, which appeared in the 6th century as an official of a small office in the public post (curiosus cursus publici praesentalis) under the management of this same *magister officiorum*, and the office for relations with the barbarians (scrinium barbarorum) noted for the first time in the 5th century, under the administration of these two imperial officials.[779] It is also necessary to underline that, starting from the late antiquity, the Byzantine government succeeded to crystallize certain norms of practice, set of rules, as well as some unwritten conventions, which defined the appropriate behaviour of the participants in diplomacy i.e., it managed to form a kind of frame which can be termed as "operational code".

Diplomatic structure

Although scholars use the term structure to explain the form of organization of a state i.e., the distribution of power between the organizations (ministries) and agencies, the work of these same organizations and agencies, but also the basic self-perception which affects the exchange of information between these, as well as between the government and society as a whole, in the case of the Byzantine Empire and its diplomacy, this term will refer to the state functions and offices, together with their officials, which were in charge of international relations, and the persons entrusted to carry out certain task in this field, what we today name with the term diplomatic service (foreign service) of a country. In this group of Byzantine officials and bureaucratic organizations which, according to the sources, were involved in various diplomatic activities, are: the imperial office (βασιλεία) – the monarchy with its authority and functions – headed by the emperor (βασιλεύς),[780] the logothetes tou dromou (Ὁ λογοθέτης τοῦ δρόμου) who was in charge of the office of the post (λογοθέσιον τοῦ δρόμου), named also as Postal logothete, with its numerous officials (interpreters, inspectors, messengers, the office for barbarians and the guard of the building for lodging of foreign envoys), and the individuals who were selected to publicly represent the Byzantine Empire abroad named with the general term envoy (πρεσβεύς), as well as apokrisiarios (ἀποκρισιάριος) and sometimes as basilikos (βασιλικός).

[778] Arnold H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey Volume I* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 368.; Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 26-27. See also Miller, *Studies*, 1.

[779] For more details see Otto Seeck, *Notitia Dignitatum accedunt Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae Laterculi Prouinciarum* (Berlin: Pud Weidmannos, 1876), 31-33.; Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System*, 93.

[780] Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 9, 38, 60.

1. The imperial office (βασιλεία)

The emperor (βασιλεύς) who was at the head of the imperial office was a central figure in the Byzantine foreign policy. Not only in theory, but also in practice, the powers of the *basileus* were absolute. The sphere of diplomacy and its tasks, along with state-level strategy, as well as the decision-makings about declaring war or concluding peace, were completely in his hands, and the level of his personal involvement in this whole process mostly depended on his character. This statement is valid not only for the period under analysis, the reign of the Macedonian dynasty, but also before it and after it.[781] Best example which indicates the high level of involvement of the Byzantine emperor in diplomacy and his absolute powers is the reign of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos. Theophanes Continuatus reports that during his reign "...letters were sent to and from the strategoi, and the imperial protonotarioi, and those in the villages, provinces and cities, and also indeed letter to and from archons of the foreign nations, these too were read by him and immediately his judgement determined what needed to be done about matters in the east and what about matters in the west, and generally he went over these affairs as if he had wings, receiving embassies, sending instructions to officials, rectifying changes which has been made in haste".[782] On the other hand, some of the Byzantine emperors, such as Romanos I Lekapenos, Nikephoros II Phokas or Konstantinos IX Monomachos, were transferring part of their competences, for instance the diplomatic correspondence, to their closest educated and skilled associates.[783] As for those emperors who were away from the capital for a large part of their reign, like Basileios II or Alexios I Komnenos had done, and were unable to manage these state affairs, they left diplomacy, in whole or in part, to other individuals they trusted, close associates, officials or family members,[784] although sometimes they performed this duty from their imperial tent in the military camp.[785]

However, it is necessary to note that the transfer of duties to other officials or to certain state structures is not a later diplomatic solution, but is, in fact, a policy from the late antique period, more precisely from the 5th and 6th centuries, when instead of being

781 Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 321.; Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 23.

782 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 448.15-449.3.

783 In the reign of Romanos I Lekapenos, Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos and Theodoros Daphnopates conducted official diplomatic correspondence with the Bulgarian emperor Simeon on his behalf. *Michaelis Pselli*, VI.190, reports that he was personally in charge for the diplomatic correspondence of Konstantinos IX Monomachos with the Fatimid Caliph during one period of his reign.

784 Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 46.

785 Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treaties on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed and tr. John F. Haldon (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), C.275-277, 406. See Ostrogorski, "Srpsko poslanstvo", 147-158, for the reception of the Serbian envoys in the military camp of Basileios II.

mobile as they were in the past, the Byzantine emperors started to reside more and more in Constantinople,[786] thus ending the era of direct diplomacy between sovereigns and establishing an intermediary diplomacy. This type of diplomacy included the need for envoys, emissaries, mediators and messengers, to whom the Byzantine emperor transferred part of his competences which were implemented through a set of strict instructions which they were obliged to follow. However, despite the fact that some of the powers were transferred, the principle of superiority in regards to decisions of the emperor remained intact and those envoys that had exceeded these during their mission were accordingly punished.[787] Furthermore, for a signed treaty with another state or a tribe to be valid, a ratification by the Byzantine emperor was required. In the part of ceremonial reception and negotiations with foreign delegations which arrived in Constantinople on a diplomatic mission, as well as in the numerous imperial ceremonies, banquets and conversations which followed these events, the emperor remained the most important figure, as indicated by *The Book of Ceremonies*.

Confirmation about the importance of the emperor in relations with other states, nations and tribes is to be sought in the official reception of envoys where a general diplomatic protocol recorded in *The Book of Ceremonies*[788], was followed, the ritualization of which allowed for this function of the emperor in diplomacy, along with the image of the Byzantine political superiority, to be perceived outside the walls of the Great Palace and beyond the borders of the state. Thanks to this manuscript, as well as to other sources, especially the text *Retribution*, whose author Liudprand of Cremona was a contemporary of Konstantinos VII,[789] it is possible to determine three main aspects of the formal official reception of foreign envoys which point both to the presentation of the Byzantine emperor as a central figure, and to his political superiority: the entry of the foreign envoys into the hall, the silence of the emperor and the automatons around the throne,[790] complemented by the role played by the imperial officials during this reception and the symbolism of their position, their clothes, as well as the overall decoration of the palace. Throughout this formal reception, the conversation with the foreign envoys was

[786] Michael Whitby, "From frontier to palace: the personal role of emperor in diplomacy", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992), 295-303.; A. D. Lee, *Information and Frontiers. Roman Foreign Relations in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 42.; Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 23.; Millar, "Emperors", 6.

[787] Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 23, 51.

[788] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 566-598.

[789] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 197-198.

[790] For more details see Nicolas Drocourt, *Diplomatie sur le Bosphore - Les ambassadeurs étrangers dans l'empire byzantin des années 640 à 1204* (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 531-537.

conducted by the *logothetes tou dromou* and the translators under his authority, as it had happened to Liudprand of Cremona and Nasr Ibn al-Azhar on behalf of the Abbasid caliph during the reign of Michael III, who stated that in the course of the official reception "... only the translator spoke. The emperor listened and just nodded his head 'yes' or 'no'. He never spoke and his uncle managed the work for him".[791] In the further meetings with the envoys this silence of the Byzantine emperor was broken and he led the diplomatic talks, although some sources, as in the case of the mission of Nasr Ibn al-Azhar, also indicate on his constant silence with which he seemed to want to send certain political message.[792]

In general, the Byzantine emperor was the most important official in the state who determined and conducted the diplomatic process, except in cases in which he arbitrarily handed over the powers to other persons, usually to his closest associates or family members. Actually, the Byzantine emperors, starting with Basileios I, actively participated in the making of the diplomatic decisions and even increased the role of diplomacy in solving problems, or in achieving state interests and goals in the sphere of foreign policy. For example, Basileios I approved a ceremony to be held for embassy sent by the pope of Rome, which was organized only in honour of the emperor.[793] His son, Leon VI, continued his father's policy of establishing ecclesiastical ceremonies for the most important Christian holidays and feasts,[794] which later found practical application in the Byzantine diplomacy.[795] Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos elevated this sphere of Byzantine statecraft to yet another higher level, as indicated by the initiative unknown at that period of human history, which he, through the envoy he sent, proposed to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz, which referred to the dispatch of diplomatic envoys on an annual basis.[796] Even the highly praised warrior-emperors, Nikephoros II Phokas, Ioannes I Tzimiskes and Basileios II, continued the state policies of their predecessors and wholeheartedly used diplomacy. So, in his text *Embassy* Liudprand of Cremona gives an interesting and vivid picture of the role of Nikephoros II Phokas in the Byzantine diplomacy, as well as the transfer of some of his authority to his close

[791] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 198.; Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes I*, 321-322.

[792] Drocourt, *Diplomatie sur le Bosphore*, 532.

[793] Louis M. O. Duchesne ed., *Le Liber pontificalis vol.2* (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1892), 180.8-24.

[794] Michael Featherstone, "Space and Ceremony in the Great Palace of Constantinople under the Macedonian emperors", in *Le Corti Nell'alto Medioevo, Spoleto 24-29 aprile 2014* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo, 2015), 598, 604-605.; Cameron, "The construction of court ritual", 118-119, 134-135.; John B. Bury, "The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogonnetos (Continued)", *The English Historical Review* 22, no.87 (1907): 420.

[795] The celebration of the feast of Saint Basil written in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 139, with the *archon* of Taron and the Bulgarian envoys as honoured guests, confirms this assumption. Bury, "The Ceremonial Book (Continued)", 420-421, indicates that the presence of a Bulgarian envoy was, in fact, common after their baptism.

[796] Stern, "An embassy", 247-248.

associates and family.[797] In regards to the diplomatic activity of Basileios II, evidence of its implementation during his military campaigns is presented by Skylitzes in his *Synopsis Historion*.

2. Postal Logothete (Ὁ λογοθέτης τοῦ δρόμου)

It has long been established that the imperial office (λογοθέσιον) of the Postal logothete (λογοθέτου τοῦ δρόμου) which, from the second half of the 8th century, was also responsible for the diplomatic activities and the measures taken, originated and emerged from the department *curiosus cursus publici praesentalis* which was a section in the office of the high official *magister officiorum*, in charge for the supervising of inspectors whose task was to take care of the security of the postal routes in the empire. When the office of the *magister officiorum* was finally dissolved, this official initially became the head of the postal office, and through this function was then assigned with the duties of sending embassies abroad and welcoming foreign ones. These obligations, along with the supervision of translators, led to the transfer of most of the diplomatic functions in the state previously assigned to the *magister officiorum*, except that of an envoy and negotiator outside the borders of the Byzantine Empire, to the *logothetes tou dromou*.[798]

Already at the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century, the functions and tasks of the *logothetes tou dromou* were fully defined.[799] His primary responsibility, which he took over from the *magister officiorum*, was the management of the post office, its efficient functioning and the planning of for the fastest and most reliable movement of people, various products and information.[800] Under his control and care, it seems, were the translators (ἑρμηνευταί) and the numerous inspectors (ἐπισκεπτῆται) who looked after the security of the postal routes and were probably successors of the late antique agents of public affairs (agentes in rebus), as well as about the internal security of the state.[801]

---

797 For more details see *Liudprand of Cremona*, 239f.

798 Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System*, 91.; Dean A. Miller, "The Logothete of the Drome in the Middle Byzantine Period", *Byzantion* 36 (1966): 438-439. About the evolution of the *logothetes tou dromou* see Rodolphe Guilland, "LES LOGOTHÈTES. Etudes sur l'histoire administrative de l'Empire byzantin", *Revue des études Byzantines* 29 (1971): 5-8. More details about the senior officer *magister officiorum* see Arthur E. R. Boak, *The Master of the Offices in the Later Roman and Byzantine Empires* (London: The Macmillan Co., 1919).

799 Miller, "Logothete", 439.; Guilland, "LES LOGOTHÈTES", 33.

800 Miller, "Logothete", 442-444.

801 Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System*, 93.; Rodolphe Guilland, "LES LOGOTHÈTES", 36-38.; More details about the translators see Miller, "Logothete", 449-458.

From the *Cletorologion* of Philotheos and *The Book of Ceremonies*, as well as from other sources, it can be noted that during the 9th and 10th, the *logothetes tou dromou* had a very high position and importance within the imperial bureaucratic hierarchy and was one of the closest associates of the Byzantine emperor. The author of *The Book of Ceremonies* informs that every morning he was received by the emperor in the hall of Chrysotriklinium in the Magnaura Palace, which was part of the Great Palace complex,[802] where, it seems, the current affairs of the state under his jurisdiction were discussed. His duty was, among other things, to present to the Byzantine emperor the future high-ranking officials i.e., the *domestikoi, strategoi, droungarioi*, etc.[803] In terms of diplomacy, as a head of the post the *logothetes tou dromou*, just like his predecessor, the *magister officiorum*, was responsible for the accommodation and provisioning of foreign envoys and embassies who were within the borders of the Byzantine Empire, as well as for both their supervision and communication.[804] The *logothetes tou dromou* had a high ceremonial position during reception and formal presentation of the foreign envoys at the Magnaura Palace.[805] This is confirmed not only by Liudprand in his works *Retribution* and *Embassy*,[806] but also by the author of *The Book of Ceremonies* when he informs on the imperial reception of the Bulgarian delegation, the archon of Taron, Olga of Rus or the Arab "friends" from Tarsus and Amida,[807] as well as of the formal greetings and questions that the emperor addressed to the foreign envoys, which were conveyed by the *logothetes tou dromou*.[808] Occasionally, the *logothetes tou dromou* conducted the entire conversation in the name of the emperor, even though he was present, as in the case of the envoy Nasr Ibn al-Azhar who arrived in Constantinople on behalf of the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil. The Arab envoy stated that "...I asked the emperor's uncle [Petronas] to take the oath; he swore for Michael, and I said: Oh king! I have received the oath of your uncle [the logothete]. Are you bound by this promise? He nodded his head 'yes'".[809] This unequivocally indicates that this Byzantine official represented a sort of "intermediary" between the emperor and the foreign envoy, as well as with high-ranking captives, or when Byzantine rebels were involved.[810]

802 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 520.

803 Ibid, 525-528.

804 Miller, "Logothete", 439.; Guilland, "LES LOGOTHÈTES", 34.; Boak, *The Master of the Offices*, 93. More about the position that the official *magister officiorum* had in diplomacy from the late antique period in Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 26-29.

805 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 567-568.

806 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 197, 239, 248.

807 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 138-139, 588, 594.

808 Ibid, 680-686.

809 Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes I*, 321.

810 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 610. See also Miller, "Logothete", 460-461.

The Book of Ceremonies mentions the existence of an office within the early Byzantine state structure carrying the name Bureau for the Barbarians (τὸ σκρίνιον τῶν βαρβάρων)[811] when it reports about the obligatory protocols when welcoming the Persian delegation. This early Byzantine office is, actually, the office of *scrinium barbarorum* which originated from the middle of the 5th century and was under the management of the *magister officiorum*. He is not named in the sources from the 10th century, but these contain evidence about the ceremonial presence of an official with the title ὁ βάρβαρος, as well as an existence of several of his seals. However, if the role of the *logothetes tou dromou* is taken into account, it is possible that an office similar to the *scrinium barbarorum* has been established during this period, or that the early Byzantine office continued its function, being more plausible explanation, but now under a different name and under the management of this official, whose task was to direct and coordinate the accommodation, provisioning, supervision and administrative safety of the foreigners in the state and the capital.[812] The building (ἀποκρισιάρειον) where the foreign envoys were accommodated during their diplomatic visits in Constantinople was also under the management and supervision of the *logothetes tou dromou* and his office, and was managed by a guard (ὁ κουράτωρ).[813] Liudprand reports on an imperial official in this building who looked after his wellbeing during his second mission in Constantinople.[814]

The postal office (ὁ δημόσιος δρόμος), starting from the time when it came under the management of the *master officiorum*, was perceived as a necessary addition for conducting of diplomacy by the Byzantine government. Embassies, both foreign and domestic, were guided and directed along the postal routes to, and from, the capital,[815] and through this office all information which arrived outside the imperial borders was quickly transmitted. The information gathered in foreign countries and extremely important for shaping the future diplomatic measures of the Byzantine government, which was conducted not only by the diplomatic envoys themselves, but also through the numerous missionaries, merchants, agents, as well as with the help of allies, was also transmitted through the post. Afterwards, all of this information ended up in the office of the *logothetes tou dromou*, or more precisely, in the *Bureau of Barbarians*, which was responsible for these affairs of the state.[816] In this way Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos probably

811 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 400.

812 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 461, 725. Also, Guilland, "LES LOGOTHÈTES", 37; Miller, *Studies*, 11.

813 Guilland, "LES LOGOTHÈTES", 41-42.; Miller, "Logothete", 446-447.

814 For the *kourator* of the Apokrisiareion see *Liudprand of Cremona*, 238-239.

815 Evidence of this is the Sassanid delegation noted in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 398-408. See also Guilland, "LES LOGOTHÈTES", 32.

816 Miller, "Logothete", 461, 468, n.1.; Nike Koutrakou, "'Eyes of the Emperor' and 'Real Spies'. Stories of espionage in Byzantine writings", *Leidschrift* 30, no.3 (2015): 62-64. For more details about the processes of collect-

managed to get the information about the Rus which he then inserted as a chapter in the *De Adminustrando Imperio*.[817] In essence, the imperial post was a tool with which the Byzantine government quickly transmitted information, directives, people and coins, all of which extremely important for implementation of the imperial foreign policy. Although, compared to the past, during this period the postal office was significantly smaller in volume, nevertheless, its basic structure and assignments were not changed.[818] Also, if there was no need to take the written and oral reports from envoys, spies, agents, as well as from the *strategoi* of the border *themata* which were important for the Byzantine diplomacy directly to the emperor, these were received personally by the *logothetes tou dromou*, or by one of his officials.[819]

What can be concluded is that the *logothetes tou dromou* had many responsibilities in the sphere of diplomacy. One of the most important was the reception of foreign envoys in the absence of the emperor, as well as the conducting of formal conversations, and probably negotiations, a task which apparently, depended on the level of trust that this official had in his eyes. All these tasks, among others, were surely performed by Leo Phokas, brother of the Byzantine emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, who was also a *logothetes tou dromou*, as reported by Liudprand of Cremona. According to him, when he arrived in the Byzantine capital, he was welcomed by Leo Phokas, and then he conducted diplomatic talks with him on behalf of the Byzantine emperor.[820] Another important task that took place on a daily basis seems to have been the informing of the Byzantine emperor of all important information which this official had received in his office through his subordinates from the postal office, as well as from the *Bureau of Barbarians*. Hence, due to the very nature of his responsibilities, and the numerous information collected by his office, which were important for the state affairs, the *logothetes* tou dromou was a close associate of the Byzantine emperor and was even sometimes perceived as the first among the *logothetes*,[821] and it can be rightly assumed that he had certain influence when deciding which diplomatic measures, solutions and decisions should be taken[822] i.e.,

ing information see Nike Koutrakou, "Diplomacy and Espionage: their role in Byzantine Foreign Relations, 8th-10th centuries", *Graeco-Arabica* 6 (1995): 125-144.; Dvornik, *Origins*, 165-184.

817 *DAI*, 9. See also Elena Mel'nikova, "*Rhosia* and the Rus in Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos' *De Administrando Imperio*", in *Byzantium and the Viking World,* ed. Fedir Androshchuk et al. (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2016), 315-334.

818 Miller, "Logothete", 442-443.; Dvornik, *Origins*, 122-129.

819 Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 112.

820 Liudprand of Cremona, 239, 248-251.

821 For the list of all *logothetes tou dromou* who were close people of the Byzantine emperor see Miller, "Logothete", 463-467.; Guilland, "LES LOGOTHÈTES", 35, 47-56.

822 Miller, *Studies*, 3.; Guilland, "LES LOGOTHÈTES", 33-34.

when an envoy was chosen and their training had to be carried out,[823] or in creation of the overall foreign policy. That the *logothetes tou dromou* was occasionally responsible for appointing officials and other individuals for diplomatic missions is evidenced by the *chartoularios* Sinoutis, for whom the author of *De Administrando Imperio* reports that he was sent as an envoy to the client state of Taron at the request of Emperor Leon VI.[824] In contrast, this official was rarely sent abroad as an envoy.[825] It is precisely because of all of these various duties and responsibilities which the office of the *logothetes tou dromou* had, that it was perceived as a sort of informal ministry of foreign affairs among the researchers of diplomacy.[826]

3. Diplomatic representatives: Types and Function

The diplomatic envoys, known today as ambassadors, played an extremely important role in the intermediary diplomacy which was established after the emperor started to reside permanently in the city of Constantinople. According to the modern definition, an ambassador is a diplomatic agent empowered and accredited to a foreign country, or a ruler, to represent the government of his country and to negotiate and conclude agreements on its behalf. However, the use of the term ambassador for this period of history, in my opinion, is incorrect since the initial form and significance of the function it performed, in a historiographical sense, was received at the beginning of the Renaissance in Italy. Hence, instead of the term ambassador, it is more appropriate to use the general terms "diplomatic representatives", "envoys", "legates" or "emissaries" since these more accurately reflect the customs of this period.[827] In that context, the term which will be used in the text will be "envoy", since it is already used in this field of Byzantine studies. Similar to the ancient Roman state, there was no separate group of people in the Byzantine Empire who's sole, or even most important, professional occupation was the conducting of diplomatic activities. There is no information in the sources which reports of persons for whom this was the main and only profession within the state structures. What can be confirmed is that the circle of people who were involved in these activities was quite wide and included not only imperial officials, but also military officials, as well as clergy. But here too, a pattern can be noticed where one and same officials or priests

[823] That the envoys were trained before going on a mission is noted by the author of On Strategy, 43.39-42. See also Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 48-49.; Lee and Shepard, "A Double Life", 33.

[824] *DAI*, 43.36-38. For other envoys that the *logothetes* had send see Jason Fossella, *The dromos and Byzantine Communications, Diplomacy, Bureaucracy, 518-1204* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2023), 122.

[825] Fossella, *The dromos*, 121.

[826] Nicolson, *The Evolution*, 25.; Hamilton and Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy*, 24-25.

[827] This is also indicated by Drocourt, *Diplomatie sur le Bosphore*, 18-19.

were summoned and sent on diplomatic missions, which indicates that they, unlike others, acquired a certain set of skills and knowledge suitable for conducting this state assignment.

From the sources which were available to us, only a small number focuses on the diplomatic envoys. One of these texts is *De Administrando Imperio*. Another extremely important source for Byzantine diplomacy is the *Excerpta de legationibus*, a work compiled on the initiative of Porphyrogennetos, but not by him personally. It contains excerpts about diplomatic missions from classical and Byzantine chroniclers and consists of two integral parts: "On the Embassies of the Romans to Foreign Nations" and "On the Embassies of Foreign Nations to the Romans". This manuscript is important because it shows the practice not only of ancient, late antique and Byzantine diplomacy in the field, but also due to the fact that it was apparently composed to represent some sort of a manual which would help in training the new candidates for envoys. Unlike most of the chapters, which are basically testimonies of diplomatic missions already carried out, one of these, which can also be found in the military manual *On Strategy* as chapter 43, is entirely different from the others.[828]

Titled as On Envoys (Περὶ πρέσβεων) and compiled in its final form sometime in the middle of the 10th century,[829] this text gives a general picture of the procedure for selecting envoys and the character traits which the candidate should have possessed, as well as of some practical guidelines according to which the Byzantine envoys were supposed to act in the field while they were on missions. According to the author of this chapter, the Byzantine envoys should have "...the reputation of being religious, who have never been denounced for any crime or publicly condemned. They should be naturally intelligent and public spirited enough to be willing to risk their own lives. [They] should appear gracious, truly noble, and generous to the extent of their powers... [and to] speak with respect of both their own country and that of the enemy and never speak disparagingly of it. Envoys must be able to arrange things properly, to take advantage of opportunities, but not to employ pressure to carry out their assignment, unless it is something they have been ordered to get done at any cost". He further states that the proposed envoy "... is generally tested before being sent on a mission. A list of topics is presented to him, and he is asked how he would deal with each of them under various assumed circumstances".[830] This perception of the envoys can be noticed even later, during the 11th century. According to Kekaumenos, a Byzantine aristocrat from the second half of the 11th century, what one

828 For a more detailed analysis of *Excerpta de legationibus* see Paul Lemerle, *Le premier humanism byzantine* (Paris, 1971), 281-282, and Lee and Shepard, "A Double Life", 15-17.

829 Lee and Shepard, "A Double Life", 29-30.

830 On Strategy, 43.

should know about the envoy is that people "...who are sent as envoys (πρεσβέυς) [are] experienced and cunning, though they feign naivety and ignorance".[831] A similar statement is made by the Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk who indicates that "...for an embassy a man is required who has served kings, who is bold in speaking, who has travelled widely, who has a portion of every branch of learning, who is retentive of memory and far-seeing, who is tall and handsome, and if he is old and wise, that is better".[832]

The content of the previously presented Byzantine text *On Envoys* indicates that it was intended as a template for preparation and training of envoys whose mission was not simply transmission of oral or written messages from the emperor, although there was also such communication with foreign rulers and dignitaries, but rather a proactive role was required which, it seems, entailed the conducting of official conversations and negotiations, whose level of initiative and freedom of action during the process however, depended on the orders received from it superiors. Also, this text reports that before an envoy was sent on a mission, he was tested. And in that process, apparently, the manuscript *Excerpta de legationibus* helped, not only as a manual for the overall diplomatic training, but also on how to avoid failure. This is indicated by the missions which were included in this work and which, in one way or another, are characterized as πρεσβεα ἄπρακτος i.e., as unsuccessful missions. Actually, this is a clear indication that the Byzantine government knew, no matter how rudimentary, about the process of planning and simulating hypothetical scenarios and its solutions i.e., of predicting of an outcome.

The credibility of the statement of the author of *On Envoys* is indicated by the fact that this Byzantine practice was also known to the foreigners. The Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz states that "...I know that he is an ambassador, who has exact instructions what to tell me, what impression to try to create in my mind and which answers to give on questions which his master possibly foresaw he would be asked".[833] The statement of the caliph al-Mu'izz, as well the testing procedure noted in *On Envoys*, both unequivocally point to the conclusion that there appears to have been some designated state body responsible for selecting the candidates, their training and testing, and for deciding which person could perform the diplomatic assignment. It most likely represented a kind of *ad hoc* council consisting of the closest advisers of the Byzantine emperor, and depending on the importance of the diplomatic mission, it is not excluded that the emperor himself sometimes participated in it.[834] This informal state body it seems was constantly attended by the

831 *Kekavmen*, 113.6-8.

832 *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyar al-Muluk or Siyasat-nama of Nizam al-Mulk*, tr. Hubert Darke (London: Routledge, 2002), 98.

833 Stern, "An embassy", 249.

834 Lee and Shepard, "A Double Life", 38, n.129.

logothetes tou dromou and there is a probability that most of the time he presided over it, because the sources report that in the past his *logothesion* i.e. office, was responsible for the relations with the "barbarians". And yet from the statement of the Caliph al-Mu'izz, that in regard to the Byzantine envoy "...we approached him from an angle which came as a surprise to him and which his master did not know he would be asked about..."[835] it can be concluded that sometimes these preparations were known to be either incomplete or unsuccessful or, which is more probable, were not carried out at all.

However, despite all, it cannot be confirmed that the *logothetes tou dromou* was the Byzantine Foreign Minister in a modern sense of the word. In fact, the Byzantines did not have an official, or an office, in their bureaucracy which would be exclusively in charge of the international relations. Such an office did not exist in the undivided Roman Empire and as their heirs and successors, it seems, they did not even imagine that such an office should be established. Probably the level of social and technological development, the geopolitical map of divided regions without fast communication between these (seen from today's point of view)[836] and the existence of several political and military centres, as well as the political and ideological position of the Byzantine emperor in the civilized world, formed an opinion and belief that there was no need to maintain permanent diplomatic relations, something that is very clearly visible in the statement of the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz, as well as in the unsuccessful attempt of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos to establish permanent relations with him by sending envoys on an annual basis.[837] Basically, the volatility of international relations between the states allowed for the officials chosen to conduct diplomatic missions in other countries, of course when needed, not to be professional diplomats as we understand them today, but individuals from other professions with skills which were suitable for carrying out this assignment.

In the sources, the Byzantine diplomatic representatives are mostly named with the general term envoys (πρεσβέυς),[838] although in *De Administrando Imperio* they are also mentioned under the name apokrisiarios (ἀποκρισιάριος), and sometimes as a basilikos (βασιλικός).[839] Even though these terms refer to the same official i.e., imperial envoy, nevertheless, for the apokrisiarios (whose origin is from the ecclesiastical sphere) or for

835 Stern, "An embassy", 249.
836 Dvornik, *Origins*, 129.
837 Stern, "An embassy", 247-248.
838 Miller, *Studies*, 50.
839 In *DAI*, 1.19-21, this term is translated as "diplomatic agent". For *basilikos* see also *DAI*, 7.3, 8.7. See also Telemachos C. Lounghis, *Les ambassades byzantines en Occident, depuis la foundation des états barbares jusqu' aux Cröisades (407-1096)* (Athenes: Typografia, 1980), 255-256. In the Latin language, the terms for a diplomatic envoy were *legatus, nuncius, missus, ambaxator* and *orator*. See Nicolson, *The Evolution*, 65.; Hamilton and Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy*, 33-36.

the *basilikos*, it is indicated that their duty was strictly limited by precise instructions, and if they had to negotiate, it was carried out within narrowly defined limits because they did not possess a plenipotentiary mandate,[840] while the general term envoy was used for all officials who were sent on a mission and who had honorary aulic titles.[841] The term magistrianos (μαγιστριανός) usually denoted a person who conveyed correspondence and messages i.e., he was a courier or messenger.[842] However, it should be noted that if there was any substantial difference between the terms by which the Byzantines unofficially named their diplomatic representatives in the sources, it was, it seems, already non-existent in the period from the middle of the 9th century[843] and their use depended on the affinity of the author, although it is indicated that the term *basilikos* basically referred to the imperial official of the *logothesion tou dromou* who was sent to the client states of the Byzantine Empire.[844]

What can undoubtedly be concluded from the sources is that the people, who were involved and performed the diplomatic service on behalf of the Byzantine emperor, already had some other profession or position in the state structures. This, together with the absence of permanent embassies among the medieval political entities, as well as the diversity of persons who conducted diplomatic missions, can be perceived as firm evidence of the lack of "professional" diplomatic representatives during the Middle Ages, as well as throughout the centuries before. On the other hand, it is necessary to note that several embassies were often headed by the same persons, which indicates to the fact that some kind of training, "specialization and professionalization", has been established in this sphere of Byzantine statecraft. This Byzantine practice is clearly visible from the middle of the 5th century.[845] When it comes to the Balkans from the middle of the 9th to the beginning of the 11th century, a typical example of "specialization and professionalization" of the Byzantine diplomacy is Leon Choerosphactès who was sent on several diplomatic missions, as well as that of the *protospatharios* Theoktistos Bryennios or Leon Rhabduchus. Hence, it can be concluded that probably no diplomatic staff was publicly formed, but in reality, i.e., in an informal context, some process of "specialization and professionalization" was established and existed.

In regards to the position held by the diplomatic envoys within the ranks of Byzantine bureaucracy and court hierarchy, it can be noted that it was extremely diverse.

840 For the use of these terms in Byzantine diplomacy, see Miller, *Studies*, 47-50.; Lounghis, *Les ambassades*, 256.
841 Miller, *Studies*, 50.
842 Lounghis, *Les ambassades*, 256.
843 Lounghis, *Les ambassades*, 299, and Drocourt, "Ambassadors as Informants", 81.n.3.
844 Miller, *Studies*, 77
845 See Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 127-129.; Lounghis, *Les ambassades*, 457-481.

Previously, during the late antique period, the officials who held the positions of *magister officiorum, magister militum,* or *quaestors*, or subjects with aulic titles, such as *patrikios* and *consuls*, were elected as envoys.[846] In the period from the middle of the 9th to the beginning of 11th century, in regard to the imperial dignity or profession of the persons who were involved in these activities of the state, the selection of envoys to carry out diplomatic missions in the Balkans was structurally more vivid and included not only state and military officials, but also persons from the ranks of the church clergy. In relation to the state officials, they were mostly from the lower echelon and held the honorary title of *spatharios* or *protospatharios*, but also other individuals who were *quaestors*, *patrikios* or *magistros* (an aulic title intended for a strictly limited group of people during the 9th and 10th centuries who had close ties with the ruling dynasty),[847] as was Leon Choerosphactès,[848] while from among the military officials, the decision fell mostly to the frontier *strategoi*, as in the case of Leon Rhabduchus or Ioannes Bogas.[849] As for the church officials who were sent on diplomatic missions, they were not only monks and clerics, but also bishops and metropolitans.[850]

Sources indicate that from the middle of the 9th until the beginning of the 11th century, people with various professions were sent as diplomatic envoys to the Balkans. This group included imperial officials, both state and military, but also ecclesiastical, not only priests but also secular people who performed certain functions in the church, as well as members of the local elite. Mostly, they were some of the closest associates of the Byzantine emperor, his most trusted officials or people who had skills and were trained "professionals", someone like Theoktistos Bryennios, Leon Choerosphactès or Theophanes.[851] However, majority of them carried out the assigned diplomatic activities out of loyalty to the state, out of honour towards the emperor, or, on the other hand, tried to advance in the social hierarchy by carrying out missions of this type, as with Kalokyros, the son of the *proteuon* of Cherson, who was awarded with the title of patrikios for this assignment.

846 Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 118-123.; Miller, *Studies*, 53-54.

847 For the importance of the imperial titles of *quaestor, patrikios and magistros* in the Byzantine court hierarchy, see Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System*, 27, 29-33, 73-74. Beihammer, "Strategies of Diplomacy", 375, indicates that these people, who had the imperial dignity of *magistros*, belonged to the narrowest circle of the imperial authority, like Leon Choerosphactès or, according to Tougher, *Reign of Leo VI*, 229, Leon Rhabduchus.

848 Miller, *Studies*, 47-63.; Lee and Shepard, "A Double Life", 38.; Nicolas Drocourt, "Ambassadors as Informants", 83.

849 Leon Rhabduchus, according to *DAI*, 32.82-83, who was a *strategos* of the *thema* Dyrrachion also had the title of *protospatharius*. For the aulic dignity that was granted to the *strategos* Ioannes Bogas see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 196.

850 Dragan Gjalevski, "Crkovnite pretstavnici vo vizantiskata diplomatija na Balkanot vo tekot na X vek", *Glasnik* 57, no.1-2 (2013): 49-60.

851 For Leon Choerosphactès see Rommily J. H. Jenkins, "Leo Hoerosphactes and the Saracen Vizier", in *Studies on Byzantine History on the 9th and 10th Centuries* (London: Variorum reprints, 1970).; Georgije Ostrogorski, "Lav Ravduh i Lav Hirosfakt", in *Vizantija i Sloveni* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1970), 87-96.

In fact, it is not excluded that some of these envoys were appointed solely for the connections they had with some of the decision-making officials (the *logothetes tou dromou* or other high officials), or as a result of bribes that they gave them. For the period from the middle of the 9th to the beginning of 11th century, the sources report of significant number of officials, both secular and ecclesiastical, who were sent on missions to the Balkan Peninsula, of which only the following are recorded:[852]

- Theoktistos Bryennios, *strategos* and *protospatharios*
- Neophytos and Nikolaos, dignities unknown
- Niketas Skleros, *patrikios*
- Konstantiniakos, *quaestor*
- Leon Choerosphactès, *patrikios* and *magistros*
- Leon Rhabduchus, *strategos* and *protospatharios*/ *magistros*
- Gabriel, priest
- Basileos, *patrikios*
- Niketas Helladikos, *protospatharios*
- Ioannes Bogas, *strategos*
- Theodosios Aboukes, monk
- Konstantinos of Rhodes, court priest
- Theophanes, *patrikios*, *protovestiarios*/*parakoimomenos*
- Nikephoros Erotikos, *patrikios*
- Theophilos, metropolitan of Euchaita
- Kalokyros, son of the *proteuon* of Cherson
- Theodoros, metropolitan of Sebasteia
- Sergios, *parakoimomenos*

However, as far as Byzantine diplomacy in the Balkans is concerned, a certain frame can be observed i.e., general principles and methods to which the imperial authority adhered to, in regards to the decision-making process regarding which envoy should be sent on which mission. What can be confirmed from the sources is that individuals who were bearers of the aulic titles of *protospatharios* and *patrikios* were often sent as envoys in the Balkan Peninsula.[853] Furthermore, unlike the missions by which a military alliance was to be concluded, or a joint military attack needed to be planned, where state or mili-

[852] Nicholas, *Letters*, 19.2-8, 21.201, 27.84-88, reports on numerous diplomatic missions sent to Simeon, led by unnamed church clergy.

[853] Unlike in the Balkans, the Byzantine Empire, according to the assumption put forth by Beihammer, "Strategies of Diplomacy", 375, sent envoys who held the high aulic title of *magistros* to the Islamic states.

tary officials, as well as members of the local elite were sent,[854] for cessation of hostilities, conclusion of a truce, as well as for establishing or maintaining friendly relations, clergymen were often sent, probably as a result of the fact that during these negotiations they could fully use the advantages of their education, oratorical skill, and their knowledge of the sciences.[855] There is not a single report in the sources which would directly indicate to the fact that priests were sent by the Byzantine emperor on a mission whose purpose was to conclude a military alliance or approve a military operation with other states and nations.[856] In fact, the reason for this should be sought in the prohibition that existed for active participation of the clergy in any military activities. According to the VII canon passed at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and additionally confirmed at the Council of Trullo in 692, any individual who decided to become a priest no longer had the right to perform military service or other state assignment. Although the sources report of an occasional violation, it can still be concluded that the bishops mostly respected this ban.[857] With one such position in society, as well as the church's repulsive attitude towards war and warfare, it is unlikely that the clergy were the best choice to conclude any military agreement. It is really difficult to believe that anyone from their ranks had at least basic military knowledge (not to mention some minimal knowledge of more complex field strategies or warfare tactics) necessary for negotiating the future military alliance or for the joint attack which was to be carried out against the enemy.

According to the information put forth in *On Envoys*, the candidates who were chosen to represent the state outside its borders had to possess certain qualities and qualifications which are indicated even in modern diplomatic manuals. For the author

[854] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 387.2-7.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis* 196.; *Leo the Deacon*, 111-112.

[855] Gjalevski, "Crkovnite pretstavnici", 54-57.

[856] The inclusion of these people is also a confirmation of the Byzantine practicality and pragmatism, or rather its ability to make the best use of the resources, in this case human, that were available to them. It is also evidence that Byzantine diplomacy did not act spontaneously through an *ad hoc* decision, but that its activities, it seems, were carried out, if not always at least occasionally, after prior consultation within some informal advisory body. Specifically, it implies that the people, who were actively involved in Byzantine foreign policy, at least in this period, had a certain level of knowledge and skills, but also the ability to think strategically, which, of course, from today's perspective it seems elementary. It seems that this knowledge allowed the Byzantines not only to determine a plan of action, but also to determine which person of trust and when should be used in order to obtain the best results, and thus to achieve the set goals, necessary to maintain the security and the international position of the Empire. The inclusion of church clergy strictly in diplomatic missions with clear political objectives where their education and oratory skills could be fully used, and the complete exclusion from those of a military nature, is another example of how the Byzantine diplomacy was carried out on the field, but also a clear indication that there were some general principles to which the Byzantine government adhered.

[857] Haldon, *Byzantine Pretorians*, n.901.; Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian People", 36. According to Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 263, Nikephoros II Phokas requested that soldiers who died in battles be included in the ranks of Christian martyrs, a proposal that was immediately rejected by the church.

of this chapter, devotion, piety, honesty, wisdom and patriotism, as well as loyalty and concern for the common good, are the qualities that the envoys should have possessed, most probably because according to Byzantine ideology they were expected to have a high moral attitude, or rather, as representatives of the emperor, to represent in a sense an imitation (μίμησις) of their imperial sovereign.[858] Sincerity was also a quality required from the Byzantine envoy. Those who were accused of any crime were excluded from the selection in advance.[859] Besides by their personal characteristics, the envoys should have presented an image about themselves as polite, honest, noble and generous through bestowing gifts, for which the author of *On Envoys* singles out a practical example of how this act could be used to an advantage.[860] This, it seems, was carried out in such a way that it would not enrich the person to whom the tributes were given and would not endanger the mission, but it would mislead this same person and would encourage him to start negotiations in the hope that the Byzantine government would be compensated with other suitable gifts for the effort it was presenting.[861]

The Byzantine envoys had to be exceptional orators, a skill that was highly praised since the time of Rome,[862] eloquent, as well as knowledgeable in sciences and the achievements of the ancient peoples, of anecdotes from everyday life, but also of myths and events from the recent and distant history. Furthermore, they had to be resourceful and intelligent with a high quality of practical wisdom and shrewdness in exploiting the opponent's weakness and mistakes while conducting negotiations, whereby the envoy could establish on a higher level not only his moral character (ἔθος) and integrity, but also to impress the opposite side with the knowledge he possessed, as well as with his demeanour.[863] The envoys were required to maintain a rhetorical balance during negotiations, flattering both their own and host's policies, improvising and responding appropriately to the questions posed.[864] But not all of them could have these indicated characteristics. It is hard to believe that the *strategoi* and other lower Byzantine officials, as well as some of the dignitaries, but also other individuals who were given the opportunity to lead diplomatic mission had all these character traits i.e., that they were resourceful, highly

858 Lounghis, *Les ambassades*, 285-288.; Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 97.

859 On Strategy, 43.14-16.

860 The author of On Strategy, 43.32-35, informs that "...an ambassador was once sent on a mission bearing gifts to a neighboring state supposed to be friendly. Finding that its government was actually supporting the enemy, he held back the gifts, along with the official letters, and simply delivered expressions of friendship instead of gifts".

861 Lee and Shepard, "A Double Life", 36.

862 Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 124-125.

863 Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 99-100.

864 For the need to maintain a rhetorical balance during negotiations, see On Strategy, 43.26-29. For its practical application by an envoy, see *Menander*, 18.6.56-61.

educated, good speakers or otherwise knowledgeable in all of the different topics.[865] Also, several examples in the sources which report about the ignorance of a certain topic of conversation during diplomatic missions point to the fact that the preparations advised by the author of *On Strategy* were not always successful or that they were sometimes not conducted at all.[866]

After being selected for the upcoming diplomatic mission, the envoys received their duties and the overall frame in which they could act, which depended on the goal (military, political or both) that had to be achieved. Some diplomatic officials had the function of a messenger who was only authorized to deliver a message or letter to the foreign ruler.[867] Such was the context of the embassies which were sent to notify about the enthroning of a new emperor, as Theophilos and Romanos II did, which was an ancient custom,[868] for reconfirmation of already existing relations with other states, recognition of a foreign ruler, announcement of military victories, marriage or birth of a porphyrogennetos ("purple-born") child etc.[869] Other envoys had strict guidelines for action during negotiations which took place within the mission parameters and in case any unforeseen situation arose they consulted the emperor for further instructions.[870] Some of them, for whom the modern term ambassador is the most appropriate, had plenipotentiary powers from the Byzantine emperor to conduct official negotiations independently and to conclude and sign the treaty with the other party on his behalf, which was, unquestionably, beforehand approved and ratified by the emperor. This was a normal practice in the Byzantine diplomacy not only during the late antique period,[871] but also later. Most likely, the missions of Leon Choerosphactès in Bulgaria, where he managed to bring back numerous captured Byzantines and thirty fortresses and places in the vicinity of Dyrrachium under Byzantine authority, as well as that of the *patrikios* and *parakoimomenos* Theophanes with the Magyars in the middle of the 10th century, are an example of plenipotentiary diplomatic envoys.[872] The envoys that misused the trust of the Byzantine emperor or finished the negotiations in a way which presented him in a clear subordinate position were

865 Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy", 10.

866 Such an example represents the Byzantine delegation sent to Caliph al-Mu'izz during 957-958. During the talks the Byzantine envoy was caught off guard by certain questions from the host, asked "...from an angle which came as a surprise to him and which his master did not know he would be asked about". For this Byzantine mission see Stern, "An embassy", 247, 249. See also Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 101.

867 Miller, *Studies*, 55, 57.

868 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 95.19-24, 470.20-471.2.

869 Chrysos, "Byzantine diplomacy", 32.

870 In fact, during the Late Antiquity period, diplomatic envoys were in constant contact with Constantinople. *Menander*, 18.2., 23.8.; Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 89-90.

871 For such examples in the Early Byzantine period see *Menander*, 6.1, 18.4, 20.1. Also, Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 93-96.

872 *Léon Choerosphactès*, 112.; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 430.23-431.3.

dismissed from office and punished accordingly.[873]

In addition to their primary assignment, envoys also served as informants and major actors in the transfer of political information between the Byzantine Empire and other states, nations and tribes, gathering knowledge concerning the administration practices of the foreign government, as well as about various military issues. Although all those information's could have been gathered by spies in various public places, especially in squares, markets, taverns, etc., this task could have been completed by the diplomatic delegation as well. However, evidence of this process of gathering and exchange of information by diplomatic officials is not always so clearly presented in the sources.[874] The "Book of Government" indicates that this task was part of the duties which an envoy had. This text from the end of the 11th century briefly sublimates the collected knowledge of the Islamic world about the Byzantine envoys. In the chapter dealing with the envoys, it is indicated that outside of their official mission they, among other purposes, "...want to know about the state of roads, mountain-passes and rivers, to see whether an army can pass or not; where fodder is available and where not; who are the officers in every place; what is the size of that king's army and how well it is armed and equipped".[875] It is in this context that the sending of the *quaestor* Konstantiniakos to Simeon should be perceived, as well as the imprisonment of Leon Choerosphactès by Simeon during his first mission to Bulgaria, or Liudprand of Cremona on his second mission to Constantinople.[876]

However, the influence that the envoys had, in addition to their main task, among other states, nations and tribes can also be observed through other activities. These officials of the Byzantine Empire were not only important as informers of events from other countries, but also as cultural brokers and mediators. They not only transmitted the Byzantine culture, but also publicly displayed it through their presence in the foreign country.[877] In fact, their arrival in other states, with their specific clothing, appearance and general manners, essentially presented a clear cultural representation of the state they came from.[878] The most vivid example of the function of envoys as brokers and me-

873 This happened to Ioannes who, according to *Menander*, 9.2, was sent by Justin II to Suania, as well as to *Michaelis Pselli*, VI.190, who handled the foreign correspondence of the emperor Konstantinos IX Monomachos.

874 That these types of information were most of the times transmitted orally is indicated by *The Correspondence of Leo, Metropolitan of Synada and Syncellus*, tr. and comm. Martha Pollard Vinson (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 5, 11, 13, 17. See also Nicolas Drocourt, "Passing on Political Information between Major Powers: The Key Role of Ambassadors between Byzantium and some of its Neighbours", *Al-Masāq* 24/1 (2012): 91-104.; Koutrakou, "Diplomacy and Espionage", 125-144.

875 *The Book of Government*, 95.

876 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 257.

877 Drocourt, "Ambassadors as informants", 87-90.

878 Nicolas Drocourt, "Au nez et à la barbe de l'ambassadeur. Cheveux, poils et pilosité dans les contacts diplo-

diators of this kind is Liudprand of Cremona and his reporting on the Byzantine culture and the Bulgarian clothing during his mission to Constantinople, on behalf of Otto I.[879]

Institutionalization and ritualization of diplomacy. Protocols, ceremonies, treaties

Among the members of the academic world that research and study international relations, the prevailing opinion is that unlike modern diplomacy, whose early development can be traced in the first half of the 17th century, distinguished by permanent ambassadors, professional staff, constant contacts and formal organizations, relations of this type before the early 15th century cannot be perceived as an international institution which evolved through the processes of institutionalization[880] due to the fact that a significant part of the factors which shape it cannot be confirmed in this period,[881] although some of these, in a rudimentary form, are evidently visible in the sources. However, what connects these two historical periods and thereto shows the continuity, and at the same time the gradual development and evolution of diplomacy, in addition to the existence of norms, rules and roles of behaviour, is the process of its ritualization presented, among other, through the formation and establishment of a set of protocols, ceremonies and agreements to which the political entities involved in its practice adhered.[882]

The Byzantine Empire was not immune to the process of ritualization of these relations between states the early development of which can be traced back to the ancient Middle East and Egypt. In politics, the ritual is basically a tool which uses a set of familiar symbols in a sequence with a goal to allow not only the individual to identify with the existing political regime, but also the sovereigns who through spectacle and other stylized forms of communication, try to legitimize themselves in their own country, as well out-

matiques entre Byzance et l'Occident (VIe-XIIe s.)", in *Byzanz und das Abendland IV. Studia Byzantino-Occidentalia*, her. Erika Juhász (Budapest: Eötvös-József-Collegium, 2016), 107-134.; *Liudprand of Cremona*, 250.

879 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 245-246, 251, 258, 263.

880 According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, (https://www.britannica.com/topic/institutionalization, viewed 24 January 2022), institutionalization is a process intended to regulate social behaviour (supra-individual behaviour) within organizations or entire societies. In this case it refers to the norms, practices and rules of interstate relations.

881 Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 39-42.; Kalevi J. Holsti, *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 178-179.; Geoff R. Berridge, "Amarna Diplomacy: A Full-fledged Diplomatic System?", In *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginning of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 213.; John G. Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (London: Routledge, 1998), 55.

882 Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 42-44.

side it. It can be defined as a type of a symbolic behaviour which is socially standardized and repetitive, an action wrapped in a network of symbolism i.e., a formalized, collective, institutionalized type of repetitive activity necessary to achieve group cohesion.[883]

One such example of ritualization in diplomacy is its protocol. In fact, a common language and common codes of interpretation between two different political entities are prerequisites for any diplomatic communication. The institutionalization of mutually understood phrases and expressions, as well as the rules governing external forms of relationship, include significant elements of ritualization. In this broader sense the protocol probably goes as far back as there has been contact between states. There are numerous examples of ritualized phrases and an acute sense of protocol from the time of the ancient Near East and Egypt.[884] In the Byzantine Empire, as a society whose elite glorified the idea of order (τάξις)[885] in such a way that it was a central theme in its political culture, the process of ritualization and application of protocols in relations with other states was basically inevitable and essential for the success of its diplomacy.[886] The purpose behind these activities was to create an impression of grandeur and might, and image of the Empire as a world power unchanged through time. This is indicated by the preserved diplomatic correspondence, the procedure of ratification and signing of the treaties, but mostly by the reception of foreign envoys, as well as the numerous imperial ceremonies and banquets, a significant part of which are written down in *The Book of Ceremonies*. That this process of ritualization was not only applied by the Byzantine Empire, but also by the states of Western Europe and the Islamic world is indicated by the ceremonies they undertook to welcome the Byzantine envoys.[887]

An inseparable part of the diplomatic communication and negotiations is the written correspondence i.e., the exchange of official letters between rulers, and also with their envoys or negotiators. That the letter was a diplomatic tool *par excellence* is indicated by the Byzantine historiographic and iconographic tradition itself. Diplomatic letters, basically, had an exceptional exterior and were usually richly decorated.[888] In it, the rule of procedure is also applied and division into several segments is noted:

883 David I. Kertzer, *Rituals, Politics, and Powe*r (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 9.; Edward W. Muir jr., *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3-4.

884 Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 45.; Erik Goldstein, "Developments in Protocol", in *Modern Diplomacy*, ed. Jovan Kurbalija (Malta: Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, 1998), 49.

885 That social order was highly important to the Byzantines is indicated by Konstantinos VII statement in the preface of *The Book of Ceremonies*, 4-5, that through the regulation of ceremonies "...the imperial rule and what is worthy of the senatorial body...the reins of power will be managed with order and beauty".

886 Anna Linden Weller, *Imagining Pre-Modern Imperialism: the Letters of Byzantine Imperial Agents Outside the Metropole*. 2014. Rutgers University, PhD dissertation, 11-12.

887 Durak, "Diplomacy", 158-161.; Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 57-58.

888 Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 44-45.

- protocol that contained *invocatio* (divine invocation), *intitulatio* (title of the ruler) and *inscriptio* (inscribing of the recipient).
- text that was divided into short *prooimion*, *naratio* and *dispositio*.
- *eschatokollon* which consisted of a short salutation, *legimus* (signature of the ruler) and date.[889]

These letters were always carried by official representatives and the recipient of the diplomatic mission (ruler of the foreign state or tribe) first paid attention to the written correspondence, and only then to oral statements, as well as to commencement of negotiations. In fact, the letters that were addressed directly from one ruler to another, as those noted in *The Book of Ceremonies*,[890] had the highest meaning and importance in medieval diplomacy, as opposed to those letters that were sent by other officials to foreign rulers (one such example are the letters of Leon Choerosphactès and the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos to Simeon) or the letters of consultations sent to the emperor from his diplomatic envoys.[891]

The ritualization of diplomacy is most noticeable at the formal receptions of foreign envoys, but also in numerous imperial and ecclesiastical ceremonies, as well banquets. When Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos writes in *The Book of Ceremonies* about the influence of ceremonies, he indicates that "...the imperial rule appears more beautiful and acquires more nobility and so is a cause of wonder to both foreigners and our own people".[892] A lot of attention was paid on the reception ceremony of foreign envoys. The protocol that should be followed for a grand reception, the one that was held in the hall of Chrysotriklinium of the Magnaura Palace, where the Byzantine emperor was seated on the great throne of Solomon surrounded by numerous mechanical birds (some of them mounted on a bronze tree) and gilded lions, a choir, as well as with a musical organ, is depicted in detail not only in *The Book of Ceremonies*, but personally by Liudprand of Cremona in his texts.[893] Integral parts of this official reception were the official greetings and formal questions to foreign delegations, transmitted through the *logothetes tou dromou*, as well as the bestowment of gifts.[894] Imperial banquets and feasts were also events where once again the process of ritualization was clearly seen through the places where

[889] For more details see Franz Dölger und Johannes Karayannopoulos, *Byzantinische Urkunderlehre. I. Die Kaiserurkunden* (München: C. H. Beck'Sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968), 89-94.; Lampakis et al., *Byzantine diplomacy*, 27-28.
[890] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 686-692.
[891] Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 45.
[892] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 3-4.
[893] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 566-569. Cf. *Liudprand of Cremona*, 197-198.
[894] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 680-686.

the foreign envoys were seated. This is most vividly expressed by Liudprand through his reaction during his second mission to Constantinople when he was placed at the farthest table, in contrast to his first mission when he was seated close to the Byzantine emperor, thus indicating that this ritual had a certain ceremonial symbolism and importance in the sphere of medieval diplomacy with which, in fact, it was intended to convey a certain political message.[895]

Even the signing of peace or alliance treaties with other states, nations and tribes were not spared from ritualization. The practice of giving religious oaths as part of the ceremony of signing the treaty documents is found in Byzantine diplomacy. As a result of the fact that a significant part of those polities did not practice Christianity, to ensure the validity of the treaty the Byzantines accepted non-Christian oaths, in a manner reminiscent of the practice in the ancient Near East.[896] This is pointed out by Menander who reports that the oath given by the Turkish legate Maniakh in 568 was "with a raised hand",[897] while the Pechenegs in the 10th century, as the author of *De Administrando Imperio* notes, took an oath according to their "zakana".[898] A clear example of the manner how the peace treaties were concluded between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria before its Christianization is the treaty signed by Leo V and the Bulgarian *khan* Omurtag. In this case the Byzantine officials swore an oath to the gods of the other, on their weapons and on the body of a slaughtered dog.[899] In the treaties of 907 and 911 with the Rus, who were still pagans, in the first case the Rus envoys swore an oath "...by their weapons and by their god Perun, as well as by Volos, the god of cattle", while in the second, they sworn upon the weapons according to their religion and law. Also, in the treaty of 971 with prince Svyatoslav, the oath was given in the name of these same two deities, Perun and Volos.[900]

Second segment of the institutionalization of diplomacy whose presence can be clearly observed in the Middle Ages is the set of mutual expectations, agreed rules, regulations and procedures between political entities that came from different cultural backgrounds. The first aspect is the rules of reciprocity which have been established since the time of the ancient Near East[901] and which are best observed through diplomatic exchange of gifts and acceptance of coexistence in international relations, while the second is the rule of precedence i.e., the order of importance of individual states in mutual communication.

895 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 199-200, 245, 250.
896 Dean A. Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 74-75. Chrysos, "Byzantine Diplomacy", 30.; Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 49-50.
897 *Menander*, 10.1.89-91.
898 *DAI*, 8.16-17.
899 *Theophanis Continuati*, I.20.4-22. See also Alexandrov, "The Bulgarian-Byzantine treaty of 927", 39.
900 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 65-66, 68, 90.
901 Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 50-51.

Gifts and gift giving was important segment of diplomatic relations during the Middle Ages. This is noted by Skylitzes in his *Synopsis Historion* when he informs how Romanos I Lekapenos told the Arabs who were captured and prevented from traveling to Bulgaria to conclude an agreement, and instead of punishment they received in return rich gifts from him, to "...declare to their master that this was the way the Roman emperors knew how to reward their enemies".[902] In fact, in contrast to the superficial description of the diplomatic contacts between states of the medieval period, the gifts that one ruler bestowed to another through his envoys are frequently mentioned, and sometimes even carefully described. What is noted by the scholars is the variety of gifts that were exchanged. So, in the sources that report on the gifts that were bestowed to, and also by, the emperor, various weapons, luxurious clothing and fabrics, books and manuscripts, relics, domestic animals like hunting dogs and horses, wild animals such as elephants, giraffes, falcons and hawks, but also Slavic eunuchs and girls are the most often mentioned ones. This indicates that there was, in fact, a common culture and interest in certain types of items, articles and artifacts, and that this was emphasized in diplomatic contacts.[903]

However, the fact that the sources usually avoid reporting, or do so only briefly, is the practice of exchanging gifts between sovereigns of identical value, a rule of reciprocity which was established at the early stages of the diplomatic relations between states. "My [gi]ft [does not amoun]t to what [I have given you] every yea[r]...", was the complaint that the Babylonian king sent to the Egyptian pharaoh.[904] Eusebius of Caesarea reports of an identical diplomatic practice. He points out that when Constantine the Great received many gifts from diplomatic envoys of neighbouring and more distant countries he "...received these [gifts] from those who brought them and recorded them, and responded with equal gifts, so as to make the bearers very rich all at once".[905] The reciprocal exchange of gifts is noted in *The Book of Ceremonies* when the protocol of the Sasanian diplomatic mission is presented. According to the author, after the envoy bows for the third time "...silentiaries receive all the gifts and have the responsibility of bringing them down, in accordance with the record of the magistros, to the sacred vestry and handing them over. A valuation is made of them, and it is necessary for the vestry officials to bring the valuation of the gifts to the magistros immediately so that he knows what it is that

[902] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 254.

[903] For more details about the diplomatic exchange of gifts see Antony Cutler, "Significant Gifts: Patterns of Exchange in Late Antique, Byzantine, and Early Islamic Diplomacy", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no.1 (2008): 79-101.; Antony Cutler, "Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 247-278.; Drocourt, "Christian-Muslim diplomatic relations", 66-70.

[904] *The Amarna letters*, ed and tr. William L. Moran (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 7.

[905] *Eusebius' Life of Constantine*, 156.

has been brought, and to remind the emperor, at the time of reciprocal gifts, what he should send in return through his own ambassadors".[906] Liudprand of Cremona presents a list of gifts he gave to Konstantinos VII during his first mission to Constantinople.[907] A rich exchange of gifts is recorded in the middle of the 11th century between Konstantinos IX Monomachos and Caliph al-Mustansir.[908] In fact, the exchange of gifts was a common practice in the Islamic world, as well as in Western Europe.[909] This is indicated by the envoy of the English king Richard who was sent to the Ayyubid Sultan's campsite and who stated that "...it is the custom of princes when they camp close to one another to exchange gifts. I have something suitable for the sultan and beg permission to convey it to him". To that, his host noted that "...you may do that on condition that you accept a comparable present".[910] Although this evidence of reciprocal exchange of gifts originates from a later period, it nevertheless confirms the continuity of this diplomatic practice and its application throughout the centuries, not only by the Byzantine Empire, but also by the surrounding states.[911]

The Middle Ages in Europe and the Mediterranean region are an era where there is not just one centre of political and military power. Unlike the epoch when the Roman Empire was at the peak of its political power and it was not inherent to recognize the equality of other states and negotiate within the framework of reciprocity, this is an era where the centre of power shifted between Constantinople, the Islamic world and Rome together with Western European states. In those historical periods where the principle of reciprocity was recognized and accepted by the informal community of states, nations and tribes, as it was during the Middle Ages, the diplomatic correspondence between two rulers contained "family" metaphors. They referred to themselves as "brothers" characterized their signed alliances as "brotherhood", and described their political relationship as "love".[912]

These "family" metaphors are also observed in the Byzantine diplomacy. The established practice of conducting relations with other states through the occasional use of family metaphors has already been studied by scholars and is named as "hierar-

906 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 407.

907 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 199.

908 For this gift exchange see Cutler, "Significant Gifts", 85.; Hendy, *Studies*, 269-270.

909 Drocourt, "Christian-Muslim diplomatic relations", 66-70.; Durak, "Diplomacy", 158.

910 *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, tr. Donald S. Richards (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2002), 155.

911 The Armenian principalities in the Transcaucasia also used this policy of exchanging gifts. The author of *DAI*, 43.12-20., notes how Krikorikios, *archon* of Taron, "...always keep the commander of the faithful informed secretly through his letter of what was going on among us; and while he wished to appear a partisan of the Roman cause, he was found, on the contrary, to prefer and favour the cause of the Saracens. However, he continually sent presents, such as appear valuable to the barbarians in those parts, to Leo, the glorious among the emperors, and got in return more and better from the pious emperor".

912 Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 50.

chy of states" or "family of kinship".[913] On the other hand, there are also opinions among scholars in the Byzantine studies which indicate that there is no explicit evidence in the sources for the existence of any "hierarchy" or "family of kinship" where the Byzantine emperor was at the highest place.[914] However, these same sources often report on the use of "family" metaphors in diplomatic communication. So, in late Antiquity, the Sasanian sovereign was named as "brother", while all other states and nations that did not match the Byzantine Empire politically and militarily were named by the emperor as his "sons". This designation between the two sovereigns could change depending on the current situation on the political field. Thus, in moments of military and political weakness of the Sasanian Empire, its ruler was named as "son".[915] Even the khagan of the Avars, according to Menander's report, at one point asked to become "son" of the emperor.[916] At times when the Byzantine Empire was militarily weak, as in the first years of Herakleios, the emperor asked to be a legitimate "son" of the Sasanian shah in an attempt to reduce military and political pressure.[917] The use of family metaphors, as well as their variability, can also be observed in the political relations of the Byzantine emperor with Simeon of Bulgaria. When Bulgaria was militarily inferior, they named Simeon as a "son" of the emperor. But when the military situation changed and the Byzantine Empire was the one that found itself in an unenviable military position, in order to win over and appease Simeon, he was named as "brother" of the emperor in the diplomatic correspondence.[918] The use of family metaphors is also observed in Western Europe, in the middle of the 10th century. This is indicated by the statement of Liudprand of Cremona in his *Embassy* according to which his "...lord [Otto] now proffers an excellent guarantee of friendship to your brotherly highness [Nikephoros II Phokas]".[919]

A clear indicator of implementation of "family" metaphors in the Byzantine diplomacy is the preserved protocol, compiled, most likely, at the end of the 9th century and finally formed during the first half of the 10th century,[920] for the reception of official en-

913 Lampakis et al., *Byzantine diplomacy*, 40-46.

914 See Wolfram Brandes, "Die 'Familie der Konige' im Mittelalter. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zur Kritik eines vermeintlichen Erkenntnismodells", *Rechtsgeschichte* 21 (2013): 262-284, and Chrysos, "Byzantine diplomacy", 36-37.

915 *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*, tr. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), IV.11.11.

916 *Menander*, 12.6.16-19.

917 *Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD*, tr. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989), 161.

918 *Daphnopates, Correspondance*, 5.3, 5.96, 6.2.

919 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 243.

920 According to Ferjančić, "Vasilije I i obnova vizantijske vlasti", 26-28, this list was probably originally compiled in the time of Leon VI or in the last years of Emperor Basileios I's reign.

voys from foreign states, nations and tribes, and the written correspondence with other rulers, which are an integral part of *The Book of Ceremonies*. In it, some of the rulers of foreign states are named as son, brother, nephew, father or as a close friend of the emperor. The sovereigns of Egypt and India were named dear "friends", the rulers of Francia, Saxony, Bavaria and Gaul were addressed as "brothers", the rulers of the states of Alania and Great Armenia were "sons", as was Bulgaria the ruler of which was previously also named spiritual "nephew", while the pope of Rome was named spiritual "father" due to his ecclesiastical position.[921]

Sources from this period unequivocally indicate the implementation of "family" metaphors in the international relations by a wider community of states, nations and tribes which included political entities of various origins, not only from Christendom, but also from countries that professed other religions and even from pagan rulers. They played, probably through the protocolary receptions, a significant symbolic role in the public conveying of the actual relations between the host state and the state or a tribe that sent a diplomatic envoy, or the relations which were intended to be established with that same state or tribe. Hence, we cannot talk about establishment of some kind of *hierarchy of states* or a *family of kinship* based on these metaphors, but more about the application of an institutionalized norm of reciprocity in external relations between states. The protocols and correspondence preserved in *The Book of Ceremonies* points to the conclusion that the Byzantine Empire adhered to this practice in diplomacy, formed since the time of the ancient Middle East, and even applied it when it had some political interest.

In fact, the *hierarchy of states* or *family of kinship* referred to in scholarship, with the Byzantine emperor at the top, was a policy based not on "family" metaphors but on conferral of imperial honorary aulic titles on foreign rulers in order to form a collective community of states i.e., a kind of an international society if we apply a modern term, mutually recognized and headed by the sovereign who conferred those same titles. Such is the case in the late antique period, where the Byzantine Empire tried to maintain its universalism by conferring the imperial aulic title of *patrikios* to rulers of other polities and thus attract the states of the Ostrogoths, Lombards, Franks, Vandals and Visigoths into its political and cultural orbit, and at the same time, to create a kind of a union, a "loose commonwealth", on the idea that Christendom is indivisible and the basileus, as the only legitimate heir of the Roman emperors, is its only sovereign.[922] This political concept, which in essence was heterogeneous and inclusive, is confirmed through the numerous diplomatic missions that were sent from, as well as to, the Byzantine government, a trend

921 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 680-691. See also Lounghis, *Les ambassades*, 261-271.
922 Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 121-124. Lampakis et al., *Byzantine diplomacy*, 41.

that was observed at an unabated pace even during the Macedonian dynasty.[923] In fact, the reason why in the middle of the 9th century the Bulgarian ruler Boris agreed to accept Christianity as state religion, just like Croatia and the Serbian principalities, should be sought in the desire of their rulers to join and be recognized by this international society i.e., the community of Christian states, led by the emperor in Constantinople. The pope of Rome, Nicholas I, himself acknowledged that entering this community of states was possible only through acceptance of Christianity as state religion. In his answers on the questions sent by the Bulgarian *knyaz* Boris immediately after his baptism, he points out that the pagan countries did not have an equal right in international relations as the Christian "civilized" states i.e., they were objects of conquest whose treaties were allowed to be broken without suffering any political or military consequences. The pope of Rome further points out that if some Christian rulers concluded a treaty with non-believers, they did so only when they intended to convert a pagan ally, but also because in this way "...they imposed [on the pagans] various taxes and received from them land and slaves".[924]

Another factor which was inevitable in shaping and establishing of diplomacy as a form of international institution was the immunity of envoys. This principle in international relations is basically the first to be established since the early period of human history itself and was exclusively important in the communication and negotiations which took place between two different groups.[925] It represents a kind of framework, a set of unwritten "laws", which the parties concerned have agreed to respect and adhere to during their official contacts and is the first segment, the basis, that can be named with the term "international law". The fact that the position of the foreign diplomatic envoys was sacred is indicated by its insertion in Justinian's *Digest*,[926] as well by Menander's report on the imprisonment of Byzantine envoys by Bayan, the Avar khagan, and on the murder of the envoy of the Antae by the Avars, which was an act that was carried out "...taking no account of the law [about the immunity of the envoy]".[927] An additional confirmation of the sanctity of

[923] For the international society, see Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 120-121. On the Byzantine missions to Western Europe see Lounghis, *Les ambassades*, 463-479. About the numerous missions to the Byzantine emperor see Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce c.300-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 138-147.

[924] About the letter with this answer of the pope of Rome, Nicholas I, to the Bulgarian ruler Boris in *FLHB* Tomus II, 114-115.

[925] Jöhnsson and Hall, *Essence*, 58.

[926] According to Justinian, *Corpus Iuris Civilis, Vol. I, Institutiones et Digesta*, L.7.18 (17), ed. Theodor Mommsen and Paul Krüger (Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1889), 851, "...if anyone should strike an enemy envoy, this is deemed to have been committed against the law of peoples, because envoys are held sacred; and so if, while a given people's envoys are with us, war should break out, the response is that they should remain free: this is in accordance with the law of peoples". See also Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 62.; Miller, *Studie*s, 86.

[927] *Menander*, 5.3.16-18., 12.4.

diplomatic envoys is the statement from the author of *On Envoys*. According to him, envoys should be welcomed "...honorably and generously, for everyone holds envoys in esteem".[928] This practice was also observed at the end of the 9th century in the *Basilics*,[929] as well as in the 11th century. Kekaumenos advises "...if the enemy sends envoys to you to negotiate peace, do not send them shamefully, otherwise the one who proposed peace will be angry at you".[930]

The sources contain more information about the treatment of the diplomatic envoys in the Byzantine Empire, than about the Byzantine envoys abroad. In order for an envoy to be under the protection of this "law", the first thing he had to do was to prove his legitimacy. During the Middle Ages, it was the documents from the ruler which the diplomatic representative carried with himself, and if it was a mission of high importance, through a notification transmitted by a previously sent delegation.[931] As a result of the fact that there was no extraterritoriality, foreign envoys were basically guests of the state or a tribe that they were visiting and who had to take care of their safety and accommodation. Due to the reason that one purpose of the diplomatic missions was the task of collecting as much information as possible about the state where the envoys were sent, to make contact with disaffected elements in the country or to spread propaganda, to prevent these unwanted activities foreign envoys were kept almost as prisoners, something which had happened to Liudprand of Cremona during his second mission.[932]

Yet, despite the frequent rhetoric in the sources about the sanctity of envoys and their absolute invulnerability, they also point to the fact that diplomatic immunity was often abused. And not only by others but by the Byzantines themselves. The medieval authorities, just like in the late antique period, knew how to behave badly towards an envoy that came from a hostile country or tribe.[933] They were kept in poor conditions, insulted and even imprisoned. This happened to Leon Choerosphactès during his diplomatic mission in Bulgaria. However, the Byzantine government itself did not adhere to the "international law" in regards to immunity of diplomatic envoys. The Byzantines also knew to treat them badly, to disparage them, as it has happened twice to the Bulgarian envoys, by the emperor Alexandros in 912/913[934] and by Nikephoros II Phokas during 966,[935] as well to imprison them and even to give order that they should be executed. In his *His-*

928 On strategy, 43.4-5.
929 Nicolas Drocourt, "La mort de l'ambassadeur. Faits, causes, enjeux (7e–12e siècles)", *Revue de études byzantines* 71 (2013): 85–86, n.82.
930 *Kekavmen*, 119.12-14.
931 Miller, *Studies*, 86-87.; Lampakis et al., *Byzantine diplomacy*, 37.
932 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 267. See also Miller, *Studies*, 87.
933 Miller, *Studies*, 87-89.; Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 62-64.
934 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 190.
935 *Leo the Deacon*, 110.

tory Theophylaktos Simocatta informs about one such case where the emperor issued an order to send a foreign envoy to prison, even to execute a death sentence.[936] However, the execution of envoys was a significant precedent in international relations during the Middle Ages, and if it had happened it would have required serious explanations and, if the sources are to be believed, high compensations according to the laws of the country from where he had come.[937]

The factors of institutionalization and ritualization played a significant role during the processes of *renovatio* that was conducted by the Macedonian dynasty in order to maintain the prestige of the Byzantine diplomacy and the position of the Empire within international society. The practical purpose of the ritualization was to shape a positive atmosphere and "smooth the edges" of misunderstandings between the two parties, of course if they existed, before the actual official negotiations began. For this to be accomplished, the Byzantine emperor had an exclusively favourable environment in his Great Palace that developed into an ideal scene for reception of foreign envoys, but also for stage management of spectacles and banquets in order to exalt and manipulate these same diplomatic representatives. The entire ritualization of the Byzantine diplomacy was, actually, established to impress the foreigner about the political and military superiority of the Byzantine Empire.

[936] *Theophylact Simocatta*, I.8.7-9.
[937] Miller, *Studies*, 90.

Tools, Skills and Praxis of Byzantine Diplomacy

"Are you not those very Romans who use ten tongues and lie with all of them? As now there are ten fingers in my mouth, so you Romans have used many tongues"

Menander the Guardsman, *History*, 19.1

In regards to diplomacy in the Middle Ages, it is necessary to point out that the concept of deploying a permanent representative in a foreign country was not known in this period. This type of state policy was a later discovery of the Italian states from the Renaissance. Until then, the diplomatic envoys were sent temporarily with a predetermined purpose, in which they represented their rulers, thus ceasing the practice established during antiquity for direct negotiations between two independent sovereigns.[938] Therefore, the ambassadorial missions were, in fact, a main activity by which the Byzantine government established and maintained contacts with other states, nations and tribes, and resolved political and military conflicts, with negotiations and treaties as its primary diplomatic tool. Another tool of diplomacy were the armed forces when used as a deterrent, already analysed in one of the previous chapters. In carrying out the task of maintaining the image of the Byzantine Empire as a medieval superpower and continuation of ancient Rome, there is evidence in the sources that, apart from frequent communication with the rulers from the near and distant regions, diplomatic envoys were also sent on missions to some of the most distant countries, such as Axum (present-day Ethiopia),[939] Turkish Khaganate in Central Asia,[940] India,[941] and even China,[942] a policy increasingly practiced starting from the second half of the 6th century.[943] However, this frequent dip-

938 For the late antique period, see Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 116.

939 Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 307-311.; Moravcsik, "Byzantine Christianity", 34-39.

940 During the second half of the 6th century, sources report how Emperor Justin II (565-578) sent an envoy to Sizaboul or Silziboulos, ruler of the Turkish khaganate, the newly formed military and political power in Central Asia, seeking an alliance against the Sasanian Empire. About the reasons for this diplomatic mission, see in more detail Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 97-100.

941 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 691.

942 David Sevillano-Lopez, "Diplomacia en la ruta de la seda: Las embajadas Bizantinas a China en los Siglos VII-VIII", *Estudios byzantinos* 4 (2016): 39-65.

943 Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 116.

lomatic communication of the Byzantine Empire with other polities, maintained by sending imperial messengers, envoys or full-fledged embassies, did not stop in the centuries that followed. In fact, its constant use can also be observed during the reign of Emperor Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, reaching almost to the level of "diplomacy for diplomacy's sake".[944]

According to the information in the source material, it can be concluded that there were several reasons why the Byzantines sent their envoys abroad. However, it is necessary to distinguish between a mission which was to convey only a letter of information and one which involved some kind of negotiation, regardless of whether the envoy was authorized by the emperor to act with complete freedom on his behalf or had special instructions during this diplomatic process. In regard to missions of conveying important information and maintaining existing political contacts, named by the term relational diplomacy or a mission of peaceful origin, there were at least two types: enthronement of a new emperor to the Byzantine throne and confirmation of existing relations with sovereigns, rulers of state and tribe leaders that had already been related to the Empire through some kind of treaty. The number of emperors who were on the Byzantine throne, as well as the alliances they had concluded, indicate the fact that this type of official ambassadorial missions were frequent. A mission of a relational type is known to have been sent for the enthronement of Justin II, Phokas, Herakleios, Michael II, Theophilos, the self-governing period of Konstantinos VII, as well for his son Romanos.[945] Envoys were also sent to foreign rulers to announce victory or defeat in certain decisive battles, such as that over Thomas the Slav or after the battle of Myriokephalon,[946] but also for other important state or personal events, like weddings and birth of a porphyrogennetos, "born in the purple" child.[947]

Apart from relational policies and protocol events, diplomatic missions were also conducted for various other political and military purposes, frequently and in different cases, which can be named under the term extra-diplomatic diplomacy or missions of military origin. For that purpose, envoys were appointed to prevent an immediate military conflict, declare war, conclude a truce during an existing conflict, or start peace negotiations after the end of the war. This type of missions were mostly sent beyond the eastern

[944] How diplomatic envoys were usually viewed in the Middle Ages is also indicated by the answer given by the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz (Stern, "An embassy", 247-248) to the emperor's remark that neither he nor his father sent an envoy to him. According to the caliph "...people send ambassadors to other people for one of the following two reasons: either because they are in need of something or because they have an obligation towards the person (to whom they send the ambassador)".

[945] Miller, *Studies*, 64-70.; Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 102-104. One such letter was sent by the Patriarch Photius to Boris-Michael (*FGHB* Tomus IV, 104-106).

[946] Drocourt, "Passing on Political Information", 100-101.

[947] Chrysos, "Byzantine diplomacy", 32.; Drocourt, "Passing on Political Information", 104-106.

frontier where the Byzantine Empire waged a continuous war with the Islamic States, although we also notice these in the Balkan Peninsula, during the conflict with Bulgaria or the incursions of the Magyars throughout the 10th century.[948] Diplomatic missions to foreign states, nations and tribes were also sent to interfere in their internal affairs, create political disturbances or to resolve a dispute over a succession to the throne, as well as to regulate the mutual trade.[949]

It is necessary to note that these two general types of ambassadorial missions, relational/of peaceful origin and extra-diplomatic/of military origin, were most often intertwined.[950] However, in spite of that, all the previously presented examples lead to a conclusion that the frequency of embassies sent by the Byzantine emperor to foreign countries, as well as from abroad to the emperor in Constantinople, was much higher than the documented information in the source material initially shows.[951]

Diplomatic methods, techniques and the art of negotiation

The chronological overview presented in the first chapter of this book about the Byzantine diplomatic missions in the Balkans in the period between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century indicates that although there is evidence of protocolary diplomacy, for the most part the source material records the missions that had a military aspect in them i.e., were conducted as a result of some conflict.[952] At the same time, the embassies whose purpose was to establish a military alliance or to maintain an already existing one, to prevent imminent military clashes, to start peace negotiations during a conflict or when it ended, i.e., after the agreed cessation of hostilities, have also been witnessed. All diplomatic missions that can be observed in the sources indicate that the Byzantine government sent a different profile of officials as envoys to the rulers in the Balkans, Pannonia and the Pontic steppe for the same type of political or military issues. The inconsistency and contradiction which can be seen at first sight in the Byzantine diplomatic activities towards these states, nations and tribes was presumably a consequence of the current circle of trusted people that the emperor had and their capacity to carry out diplomatic missions, different political interests among the members of the

948 Miller, *Studies*, 65, 72-76. For the missions sent to the Sasanian Empire see Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 102, 106-109.
949 Chrysos, "Byzantine diplomacy, 32.
950 Miller, *Studies*, 65.; Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 102.
951 For more details see McCormick, *Origins*, 138-147, 158-168, 175-81.; Drocourt, "Passing on Political Information", 93-94.; Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 105.
952 An example of protocol diplomacy is the list found in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 686-692, intended for the emperor's correspondence with the rulers of other foreign states and nations.

council which was in charge of international relations and presided by the *logothetes tou dromou*, but also by the needs of the Byzantine foreign policy in relation to these three interconnected regions.

In order to accomplish its own political and military interests, the author of *On Envoys* notes that the Byzantine government used a wide variety of assets and means, such as gold, aulic titles or gifts, during informal conversations, or while conducting the official negotiations. However, they were not factors of diplomacy that could be applied independently. Diplomatic assets and means were, in fact, an integral part of the practical procedures and processes that the Byzantines used in their relations with others to effectively achieve a certain political or military end, a kind of system of operation which can be named as a *method*. In this case, it was the procedures, or rather the manner and principles with which the informal conversations and official negotiations were conducted, how and when the diplomatic means would have been used, and the goals to be accomplished.[953] The skilful way in which the method was applied in practice i.e., with which the envoys, through the use of their specific knowledge, or the skills possessed, intended to achieve the political or military end set by his government can be named with the term technique of diplomatic praxis.

1. Methods of the Byzantine diplomacy

Unlike the assets and means that were used, the *methods* are not explicitly attested and explained. Nevertheless, from the reports in the sources regarding the Byzantine diplomatic activities, certain classification can be made with which the Byzantines were not familiar, and a general pattern of action named as "operating principles" can also be established. It is necessary to note that the procedures which the Byzantine government undertook in the sphere of practical implementation of diplomacy were probably not pre-

[953] Although Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 1-20, talks about principles and methods on a general level, thus analysing the Byzantine diplomacy towards the northern neighbours as a whole, it lacks clear systematization and classification of the factors of influence, or the use of any scientific terminology. Jeffrey D. Brubaker, *"The end followed in no long time": Byzantine Diplomacy and the Decline in relations with the West from 962 to 1204*, M.A. Thesis, The University of Arlington, 2009, 13-37, in the second chapter, apart from the goal of Byzantine diplomacy, he also reports on the methods, although in my opinion, this terminology is wrong. The author does not analyse the methods, but the assets and means which the Byzantines used in their diplomatic praxis, and these were basically an integral part of the method (various assets and means could be integrated within its framework), and not the method itself. Similar can be observed in Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 95-234, who in the second chapter of his book mentions the method in its title, but either he presents diplomatic assets and means, or describes the history of the political confrontations of the Byzantine Empire with its neighbours, without going into an analysis of the actual methods of the Byzantine diplomacy, although from the information presented in the narration, he notes that these existed.

viously systematized in detail, in a sense that some plan of action was established by some institutional body e.g., principles which the envoys would strictly adhere to while they were on a mission, but rather resulted from the gained experience in the near and distant past, and not written as a kind of manual for diplomatic conduct.[954] Apparently, something like this was not done, especially in relation to the practical procedure according to which the official negotiations were to be conducted and what course of action to follow, as a result of the high probability that something unpredictable will happen at any moment during this process, which would render this manuscript useless in many cases, although the statement given by the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz that the Byzantine envoys were previously prepared before being sent on a mission indicates the existence of some kind of training procedure. And the fact that the Byzantines wrote down what they thought was of great importance in their diplomatic relations with other states, nations and tribes is indicated by the detailed descriptions of the imperial ceremonies, preserved in *The Book of Ceremonies* and the *Cletorologion* of Philotheos, as well as the statement of Konstantinos VII about their importance.[955] Probably, the closest that the Byzantine government came to, which could resemble some kind of scientific approach to this problem which entered the personal domain of the emperor's duties, was the manuscript *Excerpta de legationibus* and the diplomatic missions recorded in it, especially the text known as *On Envoys*.

In fact, conceptualizing one overall picture of conducting official negotiations through a procedure of mirroring other missions is wrong, as a result of the fact that the negotiation process itself and the factors affecting it relate only to that mission. This process basically depended on the characteristics and features of the foreign country (its society, economy, culture) or the people with whom it was negotiating; skills of the envoys involved in official negotiations and their idiosyncratic behaviour; the information gathered by both sides related to the negotiations or to the military and political intentions of the opponent; the purpose of negotiations and the general interests of each party separately; and from other unpredictable factors which could arise. Hence, it is significant to emphasize that there were a number of factors, as well conditions, which were able to make significant differences in the diplomatic relations with the Sasanian Empire and later with the Islamic world, the Armenian principalities in Transcaucasia, the Khazars, Pechenegs, Rus, Magyars, the Slavic principalities in the Balkans, or the Lombards duchies of Southern Italy. Even two separate missions sent to the same state or tribe and with the same envoy could be completely different in the negotiation process itself if

954 According to Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 45-46, 67, such a document is not preserved in the sources.
955 *The Book of Ceremonies*, prooem. See also Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 58, n.69.

some of the previously stated factors and conditions had changed. The Byzantines were aware of this difference that existed between states, nations and tribes of different regions, and even of the micro-regions that were part of these larger territories, and therefore prepared their envoys as best they could. If this was not done properly then he would be caught off guard by certain questions from the host given from "...an angle which came as a surprise to him and which his master did not know he would be asked about; in this manner we have elicited from him answers which constitute proofs for the truth of our case: in this point and in that point..."[956], a situation that befell the Byzantine mission to the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz.

What the author of *On Envoys* points to is that depending on the current political relations with the state or the tribe, the information they acquired and possessed, as well as the goal that the Byzantine government wanted to achieve, the procedure i.e., the process of informal conversation and official negotiations that would take place during these diplomatic activities in Constantinople and those abroad, also depended. If the Slavic principalities in the Balkans are taken into account, in relation to the position of the Byzantine envoys when they had established diplomatic contacts with these polities or in the negotiations afterwards, it can be noted that these were not conducted between two equal parties. This, it seems, was the result of both practical and ideological factors. From a practical point of view, the Byzantine Empire was an actual naval, military and economic superpower during this period. While from an ideological point, it was presented internationally by its government and *élite* as an uninterrupted continuation of the ancient Roman polity that allowed its ruler, the *basileus*, to impose his claim on the highest political position in all Christendom and the former *Orbis Romanu*s, and thus for a superior position in the diplomatic contacts it established and conducted with states and potentates from that region. These major factors, actually, allowed the imperial government to perceive the Slavic principalities in the Balkans as political entities which were not on an equal footing with the Byzantine Empire and to start the diplomatic contacts and negotiations from position of superiority.[957]

From the information presented in the text of *On Envoys*, two basic *methods* of diplomatic praxis on the ground can be distinguished, which slightly resemble to the medieval rudimentary version of today's modern political approach known as "carrot and stick" methods which, if the negotiations required, could be combined in their implementation.[958] The assets and means used by these two methods were for the most part iden-

[956] Stern, "An embassy", 249.

[957] Gjalevski, "An Outline", 31.

[958] On Strategy, 43.7-13, advises that if foreign envoys "...come from a very distant country, and other peoples dwell between them and us, then we may show them anything we like in our country. We can act in like man-

tical because these could be applied by both. What differed was the technique of their implementation during diplomatic receptions and negotiations.

The first method, the diplomatic "carrot" of the Byzantines, was the method of *impressment* or friendship. If the negotiations took place in the Byzantine capital and the foreign envoys arrived from a country that was politically and militarily inferior, had no hostile claims, or had no previous contact with the Byzantine Empire, then in order to indicate their benefits if they entered into friendly relations with the emperor, the government tried to impress i.e., amaze them by displaying its wealth and power. This method was aimed at presenting the grandeur of the Byzantine capital with its wide streets and huge forums, rich markets, numerous churches and palaces,[959] the splendour of the Great Palace where the *basileus of the Romans* resided, the magnificence of the numerous imperial ceremonies, banquets and other solemn processions,[960] as well as emphasizing the abundance of wealth and power that the Byzantine emperor had at his disposal.[961] The implementation of this method is observed during the visit of Princess Olga of the Rus to Constantinople, that of the Arab envoys, as well as the one of Liudprand of Cremona during his first mission to the Byzantine capital. A great level of similarity (almost identical) can be noted among these events, not only in the attitude of the Byzantine government towards the foreign envoys, but also in the means which were used and the way of their implementation.[962]

Unlike its constant use inside Constantinople and within the walls of the Great Palace, this diplomatic method of *impressment* was more difficult for the Byzantine envoys to employ when they were sent on a mission abroad. Its implementation mostly depended on the envoy himself and on his approach of conducting the diplomatic mission, but also on the value of the gifts he brought. Evidences of this are numerous throughout

ner even if their country is located next to ours but is much weaker. But if they are greatly superior to us, either in the size of their army or its courage, then we should not draw their attention to our wealth or the beaty of our women, but point out the number of our men, the polish of our weapons, and the height of our walls".

959 A "diplomatic" tour of Constantinople was certainly organized during the second half of the 10th century for the Russian delegation tasked to familiarize with Christianity in detail, which is noted in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 110-111. Furthermore, in the middle of the 10th century, the same was done for the Magyar envoys, as well as for the hostages from the Pechenegs, who stayed in the city as "friends" after the treaty was signed. For the Magyars see *DAI*, 40.63-65, and Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231. For the Pechenegs in *DAI*, 1.20-24, 8.16-18.

960 According to the statement of Porphyrogennetos in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 3-4., "...through praiseworthy ceremonial the imperial rule appears more beautiful and acquires more nobility and so is a cause of wonder to both foreigners and our own people".

961 See Oikonomides, *Les Listes*, 164-165, 176-177, n.170, and *Liudprand of Cremona*, 200-202.

962 About the protocol for the Arab "friends" who came in the name of the Abbasid Caliph see *The Book of Ceremonies*, 583-594, while for the Princes Olga of Kiev in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 594-598. See also Durak, "Diplomacy", 158-161.

the Byzantine diplomatic history. In such a manner, by sending rich gifts, for instance "...cords worked with gold, couches, silken garments and a great many others [precious] objects...", Justinian I managed to sign an alliance with the Avars.[963] However, the easiest way for much greater effectiveness of this method was through the bestowment of gold and other precious gifts not only to the foreign ruler and his closest associates, but also to all other people with whom the Byzantine envoy came into contact, as well as the common people, an approach that Ioannes Grammatikos applied during his mission to the Caliph al-Ma'mun in 829 in Baghdad.[964] A similar activity, and probably a standard practice, was used on the Pechenegs, for *De Administrando Imperio* points out the greediness of their leaders for gifts, desiring them not only for themselves and their own retinue, but also for their wives and children, and as payment for the use of cattle as a means of transport.[965] This procedure of bestowing gold and rich gifts to individuals in foreign countries at such a level is today mainly called bribery.

The second method, the "stick" of Byzantine diplomacy, was the method of *intimidation*. It was used when foreign envoys were sent by a state or ruler that was militarily more powerful than the Byzantine Empire or had previously committed aggression against an imperial territory or one of its allies. In that case, in addition to the difficult terrain for traveling across the state,[966] instead of the wide forums, the rich markets and the palaces of Constantinople, the defensive walls and the might of the Byzantine military machinery were shown,[967] and even threats of military alliances were mentioned during the official negotiations.[968] The best example for practical implementation of this method is the second mission of Liudprand of Cremona. During this visit, the imperial "prestige" was portrayed i.e., the reception with the emperor, various luxurious banquets, processions and ecclesiastical ceremonies. But what is noticeable is that through interaction with other means, their application acquired a completely different context. This deviation from the usual diplomatic protocol was carried out with intention and with a previously determined goal to humiliate the foreign envoy and to show him, at the same time, that he was not perceived as a friend.[969] The means employed for this pur-

963 *Menander*, 5.2.1-7.

964 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 58-59.; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 99.4-100. As well John Rosser, "John the Grammarian's Embassy to Baghdad and the Recall of Manuel," *Byzantinoslavica* 37, no.2 (1976): 169.; Durak, "Diplomacy", 162.

965 *DAI*, 6.8-9, 7.8-17.

966 Lee and Shepard, "A Double Life", 31-32.

967 Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 54.

968 Nicholas, *Letters*, 23.18-21.

969 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 241, reports how during the protocolary reception he was told by the Byzantine emperor himself that they rightly wanted "...to welcome you [Liudprand] kindly and magnificently; but the impiety of your lord [Otto I] does not permit it". In fact, on two occasions *Liudprand of Cremona*, 239-241, states how it was clearly indicated to him by the Byzantine authorities that in their view he was sent by Otto

pose, witnessed by Liudprand of Cremona, were the place and positioning of an envoy during ceremonies and banquets,[970] several types of delays,[971] detainings, lateness's and postponements,[972] as well as historical arguments.[973] This was followed by the rhetoric of the Byzantine officials, which during Liudprand's second mission was anything but warm and cordial. In fact, it was tense and full of antagonism, and whose linguistic style and sharp tone complemented, even if only verbally, the means that were used.[974] Apart from this group of means, which can be named according to the purpose they were supposed to achieve, another detail can also be noted, which included show of military force,[975] threats with military alliances and future military interventions,[976] detention of envoys, various prohibitions (for free movement or buying luxury goods)[977] and isolation.[978] Gold was also mentioned in that context.[979] In fact, these were all means, some of them mentioned verbally (for instance the remark of a possible rich financial incentive if the diplomat would agree), which were intended to intimidate. Although the show of military force is the only asset that can be associated with the general phrase set forth in *On Envoys* on the method

I "...not for the sake of peace, but to squabble..." and in his name he should "... having faked peace, now he sent us you, as a κατάσκοπον, or spy, an instigator and agent of his malice". That this was a deliberate violation of the established international protocols for welcoming a foreign envoy is indicated by the statement of the author of On Envoys in On Strategy, 43.3-5, according to whom "...those that are sent to us should be received honorably and generously, for everyone holds envoys in esteem".

970 Such an example is the place of Luidprand during the imperial banquets, noted in *Liudprand of Cremona*, 245-246, 250-251, which was very far from the emperor, and which, in his opinion, was not befitting an envoy sent by the Western Emperor, and was a belittlement not only to him but also to his sovereign. This reaction of Liudprand is only a confirmation that the position of the envoys during the banquets was of great importance in diplomatic relations.

971 For the importance of various types of delays in Byzantine diplomacy, but in a military context, see Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 251.

972 On the detaining of Liudprand upon entering Byzantine territory in *Liudprand of Cremona*, 281. For the several-hours delay at the Caria Gate, see *Liudprand of Cremona*, 239. For the lateness's and postponements of the Byzantine officials, see *Liudprand of Cremona*, 248, 255-256, 269.

973 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 243, 246-247, 270.

974 Ibid, 238, 241.

975 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 238, 250, 258, 269, on several times indicates the presence or use of a guard during his second mission. According to Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (London: Pinguin Books Ltd, 2007), 180, the ceremonial guards that attended imperial banquets were composed of various ethnicities, such as Black Christians, Khazars and Turks, and were, in fact, intended to emphasize the Byzantine military power and the universality of the imperial authority.

976 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 257, 53.

977 For the ban on movement and detention as a diplomatic measure, see *Liudprand of Cremona*, 247, 267-268. The prohibition imposed on him, to purchase and export silk and other precious clothing outside the borders of the Byzantine Empire, noted by *Liudprand of Cremona*, 271-272, was a clear expression that the Byzantine emperor did not look kindly on him and his master.

978 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 253, states that he was left for three weeks without any contact.

979 For gold as a verbal means of intimidation, see *Liudprand of Cremona*, 271.

of *intimidation*, nevertheless, other attested means from the two mentioned groups, as well as the rhetoric of the diplomatic talks itself, indicate that, in fact, it is the same method, but presented in much more detail. In contrast to *impressment*, the method of *intimidation* was rarely used by the Byzantine government, both at home and in missions abroad, not only because of the extremely limited possibilities for success, but also due to the possibility that the diplomatic envoy who was sent, his security and immunity in accordance with the established informal international law may not be guaranteed.

2. Technique of diplomatic praxis

As far as the *technique* of Byzantine diplomacy is concerned, some ideas and theories have already been presented by the Byzantines scholars, originating several decades ago. However, they mainly refer to foreign relations, not to the diplomatic practice itself. One of these is the thesis presented by Zakythinos at the XII Congress of Byzantine Studies. According to his analysis, the technical aspects of the Byzantine diplomacy covered more than thirty points. Some of these aspects were: negotiations conducted between sovereigns, negotiations between accredited representatives, diplomatic correspondence, the personnel for preparation of diplomatic missions, transport and maintenance, hierarchy and specialization of ambassadors, letters, documents, gifts, imperial titles, reception of ambassadors, immunity, political marriage, alliances, oath of ambassadors, economic agreements, exchange of prisoners, gathering of information and espionage, etc.[980] Although some of these points had no close connection with diplomacy, such as shipwreck, xenophobia or heretics, the scholars have pointed out that the rest of the presented "techniques" could be divided into several main groups: diplomatic correspondence and documents, organization of missions, receptions of envoys, forms of alliances, peace treaties, economic treaties, the rights of envoys, the frontier, the status of foreigners and extra-diplomatic activities of the envoys.[981]

However, a large part of these points which have been presented, in their essence, do not represent what is meant by the general term technique, skilful way or specific knowledge through which people perform something or achieve some goal, but rather, these are what is called today a diplomatic tool or instrument, assets and means, and emerged as a result of institutionalization and ritualization of diplomacy over the centuries. Hence, in my opinion, in relation to Byzantine diplomacy, the term technique can be used to name all those skills and knowledge of the actors (the emperor, envoys and other

[980] *Actes du XII Congrès*, 318.
[981] Kazhdan, "The Notion of Byzantine diplomacy", 6.

officials) that participated in this state activity and where with practical application, in a skilful way, using various assets and means, could achieve the political and military ends of the state, which was made possible through the process of ritualization, within the scope of the diplomatic tools or instruments i.e., informal conversations, official negotiations and signing of treaties. All these activities, and thus the technique of the Byzantine diplomacy, were of an idiosyncratic nature. These mostly depended on the personal characteristics of the involved officials i.e., on the manner which they thought was best to apply their education, the knowledge they acquired and the skills, the information and means they possessed in order to achieve the goal of the mission, despite the possibility that some course of action had previously been assigned by the government.[982] One point of view regarding the *technique* of diplomacy is presented by the author of *On Envoys* which refers to the use of gifts, and thus to the further course of the mission, and is about an envoy who, after realizing the hostile attitude of the host state, in fact, "...he held the gifts, along with the official letters, and simply delivered expressions of friendship instead of gifts...",[983] although he could hand over the gifts and thereby appease the enemy.

In that context, it can be concluded that each of the envoys, like those from the late antique period, for example Zacharias and Valentinus, or Ioannes Grammatikos, the *protovestiarios* Theophanes, Ioannes Mystikos, Leon Choerosphactès and Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos who were Byzantine envoys during the 9th and 10th centuries, had their own skilful way of performing their diplomatic duty which depended mostly on their education, overall knowledge and idiosyncratic behaviour. Although not all, most of the Byzantine officials appointed as envoys throughout the Byzantine history had a higher level of education which, among other things, included knowledge of rhetoric, theology and other religious matters, history, philosophy, ethnography, ancient philosophy, warfare etc., but had a different manner of practical implementation of this same knowledge when performing a certain task i.e., they had a different technique, skilful way, "...to arrange things properly..."[984] in the field of diplomatic praxis which was influenced by the previously presented factors. Thus, Leon Choerosphactès had different technique for conducting negotiations, solving problems, concluding treaties and achieving objectives in the Balkan Peninsula in contrast to the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos, which can be noticed through their different application of knowledge and skills, the unique approach (one such example is Leon Choerosphactès who used his knowledge in semantics and punctuation in his correspondence with the Bulgarian ruler Simeon to achieve the goals set by the state), the written correspondence and, finally, the outcome of their diplomatic activities.

[982] On Strategy, 43.30-32. For an example regarding the negotiating technique see Panagiotis Antonopoulos, "Byzantine diplomacy before 1000 AD", *Journal of East Central Europe* 26, no.2 (1999): 3-4.
[983] Ibid, 43.34-35.
[984] Ibid, 43.30.

3. Diplomatic negotiations: imperial missions in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe

In the period from the middle of the 9th to the beginning of the 11th century the Byzantine government undertook a large number of diplomatic missions in the Balkans and the regions which were connected to it, such as the Pannonian plain and the Pontic steppe. Also, from these regions the Byzantines received a large number of embassies in Constantinople. During these diplomatic contacts, the source material reports that the Byzantine government in the premises of the Great Palace, as well as its envoys at the courts of the foreign states and before the rulers of tribes from the Balkans, Pannonia and the region north of the Black Sea, adhered for the most part to the basic principles of medieval diplomacy i.e., to the norms, rituals, rules and roles of behaviour, set forth in the chapter *On Envoys*, and thus to the implementation of the general methods of Byzantine diplomatic practice, although these same sources also note some events that indicate the opposite.

There is not much information in the sources about the diplomatic mission of the *protospatharios* Theoktistos Bryennios, who was sent to the Bulgar *khan* Boris in 852. The trust he had from the empress-regent Theodora about this assignment was the result of the military and negotiation skills that he possessed, which became evident to the Byzantine government after he successfully subdued the *Sklaviniai* of Ezeritai and Milingoi in the Peloponnese.[985] The reason why he was selected for this mission is probably identical to those of other frontier *strategoi* who were sent on diplomatic missions, namely his negotiation skills and knowledge of the surrounding peoples. Hence, Bryennios was probably well acquainted not only with the situation in the Balkans, but also possessed a certain knowledge of the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations, knowledge which, if used in the right way and at the right moment, would have a strong influence not only on the course of the peace negotiations, but also on their final outcome. The positive outcome of the mission points to the fact that he successfully applied his skills, but due to the poor political position in which the Byzantine Empire was at that given moment, it is hard to believe that he managed to achieve the intended goal through *intimidation* of the Bulgarians.

The consequences of the official diplomatic negotiations between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria, which begun in 863 and ended with the signing of a peace treaty, resulting with the Bulgarians' acceptance of the Christian religion from the patriarchate of Constantinople and its introduction into the Byzantine cultural sphere, were long-lasting. However, by 867 the political contacts were severed and the Bulgarian state turned towards Rome and the papacy. Immediately after this situation had occurred, a

[985] For the subjugation of these Sklaviniai, see *DAI*, 50.21-25.

more intense diplomatic communication began between the two Balkan polities. During these renewed political contacts between the two states, except a possible written correspondence, numerous Byzantine envoys were probably also sent to the Bulgarian court, and the imperial government often received envoys from Bulgaria. Besides on a highest formal and protocolary level, the possibility that there were other meetings between these envoys behind closed doors, which could have influenced the final outcome of these negotiations, cannot be ruled out. In fact, both Anastasius Bibliotecarius[986] and Theophanes Continuatus[987] confirm the sending of numerous embassies, the bestowment of gold and various precious gifts, conferment of titles, and organization of various solemn ceremonies and formal banquets in the Great Palace. Hence, it can be concluded that with intention of soothing, convincing and reassuring the Bulgarian ruler of the good faith of the emperor, and thereby returning Bulgaria under the political influence of the Byzantine Empire, the Byzantines used the method of impressment and the assets and means which corresponded to this diplomatic practice: gold, titles, various luxury gifts and formal banquets.

The sources report of increased Byzantine diplomatic activity among the Serbian principalities which began immediately after the naval campaign of the *patrikios* Niketas Ooryphas against the Arabs in the Adriatic Sea. According to these same sources, the main reason was the Christianization at the initiative not only of the local rulers but also of the Byzantine government, as well as the desire of the Slavs from this region of the Balkan Peninsula to find themselves under a good government and to become again subjects of the Byzantine emperor, for which priests were specially sent together with a diplomatic representative. Although it is indicated that the reason behind this Byzantine involvement in the region was over ecclesiastical matters, propagation of Christianity and baptism of nonbelievers on their own request, this mission actually is one of the many which the imperial government conducted on the order of the emperor, and their agenda was primarily secular, political and military, and then ecclesiastical.[988] Due to the fact that the available sources are silent about the course of the official negotiations with the Slavic principalities i.e., the methods, techniques and means used throughout this process, no plausible conclusion can be drawn which would explain how these were conducted, or what means were implemented, in order to achieve the desired result. The most which can be confirmed in this case is that the Byzantine envoys probably followed the overall diplomatic principles stated by the author of *On Envoys*.[989]

986 *Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, Col. 20 B.
987 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 342.8-15.
988 Gjalevski, "Diplomatskite aspekti", 72-80.
989 Gjalevski, "An Outline", 31-32.

What can be assumed from the sources is that in an attempt to convince the Serbian leaders of the imperial benevolence and fairness of the terms offered to them during these negotiations, the Byzantines apparently used certain diplomatic means. Apart from the existing military and political situation in the Balkans, which was always an important initiator for mutual rapprochement, the Byzantine envoys, it seems, also used historical facts related to the area of Dalmatia in the official negotiations.[990] Similarly, as a means of diplomatic persuasion, during negotiations the Byzantine government most likely offered certain financial incentives to the Serbian leaders, or as in the case of Michael, the ruler of Zachlumia, who was, as noted in the sources an *anthypato*s and *patrikios* in the beginning of the 10th century, they were conferred with imperial aulic titles.[991]

The transfer of the trade centre with Bulgaria from Constantinople to Thessalonica in 894 led to a strained relationship between the two states, which was followed by a military escalation and conflict that ended unfavourably for the Byzantine Empire, and thus to an intensified and frequent diplomatic contact. However, as a result of the lack of relevant data in the sources, it is very difficult to determine whether the reason for relocation of the centre of Bulgarian trade was a diplomatic sanction aimed at Bulgaria or an internal economic measure of the Byzantine government. The manner in which Leon VI rejected the accusations presented in Simeon's letter indicates the fact that this transfer of the centre of trade was apparently treated as an internal matter of the Byzantine Empire, a decision which, although indirectly, caused considerable damage to the Bulgarian economy and reputation, but nevertheless could not be a subject of talks and negotiations between a state that had the right for universal hegemony and a state whose ruler was perceived as a man subjugated to the will of the emperor. No matter how arrogant and inadequate these moves of the Byzantine government towards Bulgaria were, they cannot be presented as an evidence for non-existence of a foreign policy, but only as a fact which indicates that the Byzantines conducted and managed their international relations and other diplomatic activities, if put aside the personal interests and motives of the officials involved, according to certain principles and ends, but also beliefs, which were shaped and influenced by their own imperial ideology.

The next steps taken by Leon VI in relation to this conflict were to conduct extensive parallel military preparations and official negotiations. For the upcoming Bulgarian campaign, he sent the *patrikios* Niketas Skleros beyond the Danube to persuade the Mag-

990 Although it originates from the middle of the 10th century, *De Administrando Imperio* as a source undoubtedly presents a clear picture on the way the Byzantines perceived this territory in the Balkans - as an integral part of their state which was only temporarily outside their control.

991 *DAI*, 33.16.

yars to cross the river and ravage Bulgaria.[992] The course of negotiations, as well as the method used by the envoy, important for concluding the military treaty, although only superficially noted in the sources, nevertheless, unequivocally leads to the conclusion that the diplomatic practice of *impressing* by bestowing wealth was used on this occasion. In his *Chronicle* Theophanes Continuatus clearly indicates the persuasive power that Byzantine gold and other precious objects had among the leaders of the northern tribes,[993] and which, according to Skylitzes, managed to "...persuade them to take up arms against the Bulgars".[994] Once the negotiations were over, according to the established medieval diplomatic protocols, the *patrikios* Skleros took hostages, which was an established international measure of security whereby the parties involved would actually honour the previously concluded agreement.[995] At the same time, diplomatic contact was also established with the ruler of Serbia through Leon Rhabduchus, *strategos* of *thema* Dyrrachion, who was similarly persuaded to join with the bestowment of a large sum of gold.[996]

However, the Byzantine diplomatic activity did not end there. According to Theophanes Continuatus, at the same time when the Byzantine army was approaching the Bulgarian border, the Byzantine emperor sent the *quaestor* Konstantiniakos to Simeon in order to negotiate peace, but was immediately imprisoned by his host. According to Simeons's reaction, it is possible to assume that the offered truce by the Byzantine envoy was probably presented in an ultimate form from a position of strength, using a method of *intimidation*, while letting the Bulgarian *knyaz* know about the military readiness of the imperial army. Yet, with an army already deployed on the Bulgarian border and a fleet sent to effectuate the already concluded military alliance with the Magyars who were located at the mouth of the Danube River, sending of an envoy, who was embarrassed and publicly humiliated by Simeon, appears more like a diplomatic measure through which the current military preparedness of the Bulgarian state could have been discovered, rather than a sincere attempt by the Byzantine emperor to conclude peace.[997] This military assignment of the envoys is noted by Leon VI in his *Taktika* only a few years after the

[992] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 170-171.

[993] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 358.9-10.

[994] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 171.

[995] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 358.10-12, reports that "...Skleros met with them and persuaded them... and took hostages and returned to the emperor". Cf. Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 171.

[996] *DAI*, 32.77-79.

[997] Although the Byzantine tactics of warfare were established in such a way as to avoid direct battles with the enemy, however, to draw a general conclusion that even when militarily superior the Byzantines were willing to conclude a truce is implausible. Although this military tactic is attested in the military treatises, there are still other tactics and manoeuvres in these sources that are in conflict with it. In fact, very often the authors in accordance with the established imperial ideology wanted to portray the Byzantine emperor in a positive way, as a ruler whose highest ideal was peace.

end of this campaign. He points out that in an attempt to find as much as possible about the actual military situation, it was desirable for the Byzantine military commander before the battle to "...send your own *apokrisiarios* or envoys with submissive words and then suddenly launch an attack. At times you might be conducted into the very camp of the enemy, either in your own country or in theirs".[998] Apart from being an attempt to scout the current situation in the ranks of the enemy before the beginning of the conflict, these negotiations, it seems, were also some sort of deception through which the Byzantine strategy was supposed to remain unnoticed by the Bulgarians i.e., to get enough time so that it can be carried out smoothly in the field.

The poor and inadequate political measures that followed the Bulgarian defeat completely jeopardized the activities of the Byzantine envoy Leon Choerosphactès who was sent to conduct diplomatic negotiations. Deprived of his freedom immediately after his arrival and isolated in the fortress of Mundraga, he started peace negotiations only in writing. His imprisonment, in fact, limited his ability for diplomatic action and made it impossible for him, to gather additional information through direct contacts, but at the same time to understand the plans and intentions of the Bulgarian *knyaz*,[999] knowledge which he could then use to his advantage during negotiations and when approving on the final points of the peace agreement.[1000] The preserved letters of Choerosphactès from the correspondence with Simeon give some insight into the methods which the Byzantine envoys used during negotiations with other states, nations and tribes, as well as the principles they adhered to, which is the method of impressment. What can be observed is that no matter what the military and political situation was, favourable or unfavourable for the Empire, or whatever the behaviour of the host was, the envoy had to maintain a high level of politeness and great respect for him and his country.[1001] This, one of the basic principles of Byzantine diplomacy, is clearly observed in each of the letters sent to Simeon, where, despite the captivity, Leon Choerosphactès showered the Bulgarian ruler with various kind epithets.[1002] However, despite all the efforts, there was no peace agreement, but a new pitched battle which ended unfavourably for the Byzantine Empire. After the catastrophic defeat at Boulgarophygon, Choerosphactès was sent to Simeon again,

998 *Taktika*, XVII.5.

999 Probably the imprisonment of Leon Choerosphactès was the only measure through which Simeon could successfully keep his plan to attack the Magyars a secret. For Simeon's military campaign against the Magyars, see *Theophanes Continuatus*, 359.10-14, and Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 171.

1000 *Léon Choerosphactès*, 76-91. For the negotiations see Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 106.

1001 The author of the chapter *On Envoys* in On Strategy, 43.26-29, emphasise the need for politeness from the Byzantine envoys in any situation.

1002 In his letters *Léon Choerosphactès*, 76-86, puts forth many kind epithets and words. He names Simeon as most humane, wonderful, greatest and just of all the princes.

and peace was finally concluded. The terms which were agreed upon are partially attested by the Byzantine envoy himself in a letter sent to Leon VI in the period when he fell out of his favour and goodwill. According to Leon Choerosphactès, he managed "...to receive [from Bulgaria] 120,000 prisoners and conclude a written peace treaty".[1003]

The raiding campaign of the Rus in 907 through the suburbs of Constantinople had led to a conduct of long diplomatic negotiations that ended first with a truce and a tribute, and during 911 with a conclusion of a trade and peace treaty. Besides the fact that throughout the negotiation talks appeasement of the Rus was carried out by granting numerous concessions, thereby also satisfying the Byzantine interests, the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* reports that the emperor "...Leon honored the Russian envoys with gifts of gold, palls, and robes, and placed his vassals at their disposition to show them the beauties of the churches, the golden palace, and the riches contained therein. They thus showed the Russes much gold' and many palls and jewels, together with the relics of our Lord's Passion: the crown, the nails, and the purple robe, as well as the bones of the Saints. They also instructed the Russes in their faith, and expounded to them the true belief. Thus the Emperor dismissed them to their native land with great honor".[1004] This passage, in essence, represents unequivocal evidence for the usage of the method of *impressment* by the Byzantines while negotiating with foreign envoys.

The extremely reckless behaviour of Emperor Alexandros towards the Bulgarian delegation outside the established international protocols in 913 deteriorated once more the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations and led to a long-term military conflict which finally ended with the death of Simeon. During this period of hostile relations with Bulgaria, which lasted more than a decade, numerous delegations were sent with a given approval from the Byzantine government to negotiate a truce and sign a formal treaty. What the sources and preserved correspondence indicate is that, depending on the current situation, the Byzantine government, in order to achieve their political ends, applied the methods of *impressment* and *intimidation*.

A mission to Bulgaria was sent only after it became clear that despite the attempts to impress and appease Simeon through flattery and glorifying him as a man, but also as a virtuous ruler and Christian, he had no intention of backing down from a military intervention. The patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos reports that as a result of this situation, the senate in Constantinople decided to send an official delegation to the Bulgarian court, which would convey the Byzantine commitment to peace not only through a letter, but also personally.[1005]

[1003] *Léon Choerosphactès*, 92.
[1004] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 68-69.
[1005] Nicholas, *Letters*, 3, 5, 6.

This Byzantine delegation seems to have sought to demonstrate superiority and might which was based on their own perception of the Byzantines as the "Chosen People" and their state as a political entity through which God's will was carried out. This can be noted from the statement of the Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos since during negotiations the Byzantine government did not offer additional concessions from those written in the agreement of 896, except that nothing would be asked in return from the Bulgarians, for which, if there was a need, an oath would also be given.[1006]

The negotiations which began immediately after Simeon arrived at the head of his army before the walls of Constantinople in 913 are not recorded in the sources. What can be confirmed is that the meeting lasted a long time and ended with an agreement where the Byzantine side granted to the Bulgarian knyaz numerous political benefits. This is understandable due to the fact that the Byzantine Empire was in an unenviably bad military position at that given moment. The only way out of this crisis was to somehow satisfy Simeon's demands without questioning the empire's position in international relations. If one analyses what seems to have been agreed upon i.e., re-payment of the tribute agreed during the reign of Leon VI, conferral of the title of basileus and marriage of the Byzantine crown prince to a Bulgarian princess sometime in the future, it can be concluded that as a result of the weak position which the regency of Nikolaos Mystikos had, during official negotiations the Byzantine government implemented some kind of an appeasement policy by offering concessions which, probably, was applied through the method of *impressment* because Skylitzes indicates that "...Simeon and his children returned to their own land, gratified with gifts".[1007]

In 917 the new Byzantine regency intended to renew the military conflict with Bulgaria, which resulted with several diplomatic missions and military alliance negotiations with some of Bulgaria's neighbouring countries and nations. Thus, the *strategos* of the *thema* Cherson, Ioannes Bogas, was sent to the land of the Pechenegs in 917. After impressing them by bestowing gold and gifts, as a measure to secure the already concluded military alliance, the Byzantine envoy, according to the established medieval norms, took hostages from them.[1008] Just as with the Pechenegs, the diplomatic mission in Serbia was also conducted by a border military commander i.e., by the *strategos* of *thema* Dyrrachion,[1009] who used rich gifts and gold as a means of persuading its ruler, more precisely, by applying the method of *impressment*, which is another evidence that

[1006] Ibid, 6.28-34.
[1007] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 195.
[1008] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 387.2-4; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 196.
[1009] *DAI*, 32.86-91.

the border military commanders were often entrusted with activities which undoubtedly entered the domain of diplomacy.

The establishment of diplomatic contacts with the Pechenegs and the maintaining of the already established relations were carried out in two ways: by sending an envoy directly from Constantinople, or through an imperial official from the city of Cherson. The missions coming from the Byzantine capital were led by high officials, usually known by the term of *apokrisiarios* or *basilikos*, members of the imperial intelligence service.[1010] The selection of these envoys was probably done according to their suitability and readiness for the mission that followed. Emperor Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos also indicates that the meetings of the Byzantine envoys with the Pechenegs were undertaken traveling through Cherson[1011] or directly by a warship to the mouth of the Dnieper and Dniester rivers, where this tribe was migrating and dwelling frequently.[1012] After the initial contact was established, according to the generally accepted rules of medieval diplomacy, hostages were given to guarantee the security of the negotiations that followed. This procedure differed depending on whether the Byzantine envoy arrived via Cherson or directly by ship from Constantinople. If negotiations ended successfully and friendly relations and a military alliance were established the Pechenegs swore an oath before the Byzantine envoy according to their "zakana", while the Byzantines, in order to ensure that the other side would adhere to the agreement, took hostages and a diplomatic envoy who, on an annual basis, stayed as "friends" in the capital "...under charge of the competent minister..." and enjoyed "...all imperial benefits and gifts suitable for the emperor to bestow".[1013]

However, it must be noted that apart from these diplomatic missions which were conducted with a specific purpose, the sources report that there were also other regular contacts on a daily basis established by the Chersoneses while trading with the Pechenegs in their own city. Presumably, the person in charge to maintain these contacts with the Pecheneg leaders of clans was the *strategos* of Cherson, or one of the more important nobles from this city. It seems that they also executed very important diplomatic tasks among this steppe people. The *strategos* of Cherson, in addition to his military and administrative assignments, like all other border commanders, also had a task of collecting information, in his case from the tribes in the Pontic steppe, important for the security of the Byzantine Empire.[1014] Theophanes Continuatus reports that Ioannes Bogas, *patrikios*

[1010] For *apokrisiarios* see *DAI*, 1.19. For *basilikos* in *DAI*, 7.3, 8.7.
[1011] *DAI*, 7.3-4.
[1012] Ibid, 8.5-9.
[1013] For more details see *DAI*, 1.20-24, 8.16-18.
[1014] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 72.; Nicholas, *Letters*, 9.99-102.

and *strategos* of Cherson, started the negotiations with the Pechenegs during the reign of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos' regent, his mother the empress Zoe, on a previously received report that the Bulgarians were already in talks with this steppe tribe.[1015]

After the defeats of the imperial army on the battlefield the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations were intertwined with countless diplomatic contacts between the parties and a frequent correspondence. A large number of embassies were sent to the Bulgarian capital, led by imperial officials who brought not only proposals for peace but also various gifts as a kind of goodwill gesture, or by priests who, through their holiness, piety and oratory, were supposed to influence Simeon. As a result of the extremely unfavourable situation which arose as a consequence of the military defeats, the Byzantine government used the method of *impressment* in the negotiations along with the policy of appeasement, which is clearly indicated in the sources.[1016] Furthermore, sometimes *intimidation* was also used through disseminating misinformation during the course of diplomatic correspondence, for example Nikolaos Mystikos' statements regarding the formation of an anti-Bulgarian coalition of Rus, Alans, Pechenegs and Magyars, or about an alleged military preparations, all with the aim of forcing Simeon to take a seat at the negotiating table. However, it should be noted that the real formal negotiations were only conducted at Kosmidion in 923 that ended in a truce, but not with a concluded peace treaty. Same as before, at this meeting too, the Byzantine government did not deviate from applying the method of *impressing* during official negotiations. Skylitzes states that after the meeting between the two rulers had ended, the Byzantine emperor bestowed "...Simeon with magnificent gifts".[1017]

Once the situation in the Balkans had calmed down and a peace treaty was signed with the new Bulgarian ruler Petar, Croatia and the Serbian principalities were no longer politically important to the Byzantine Empire as before. However, the sources indicate that in time of Michael and Tzeeslav/Časlav Zachlumia and Serbia were still beneficial to the Byzantine foreign policy in the Adriatic region. For Michael, an evidence of the Byzantine diplomatic activity is his imperial aulic title of *anthypatos* and *patrikios*.[1018] Regarding Časlav,[1019] it is in the fact that his reign started with Byzantine political assistance which included a large financial subsidy.[1020] Receiving the royal insignia from

[1015] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 387.2-3.
[1016] Nicholas, *Letters*, 9.121-226, 14.106-155, 18.53-84.
[1017] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 213.
[1018] About the reign of Michael see Uzelac, "Prince Michael of Zahumlje", 236-245. According to Živković, *Portreti vladara*, 81, as a Byzantine ally, in 927 he succeeded to conquer the city of Siponto in South Italy from the Arabs.
[1019] *DAI*, 32.128-145.
[1020] According to Mirosław J. Leszka, "On the Reliability of Constantine Porphyrogenitus' Account of the

Constantinople and identifying the Croatian rulers in the sources "...as eparchs and patricians..." is clear evidence that there were some diplomatic contacts with Croatia as well.[1021] All of these examples, in fact, point to the fact that the established diplomatic relations were achieved by implementing the method of impressment shown through the grandeur and opulence of the Byzantine wealth and imperial aulic titles.[1022]

In the middle of the 10th century, the Byzantine diplomacy turned its focus to the solving of the military and political problems it had with states and peoples north of the Balkan Peninsula. It was the Magyars and the Rus. After it signed a short-term truce, as well as a peace treaty in 943 which was short-lived, the Byzantine government undertook a more intensive diplomatic initiative to finally resolve the Magyar raiding campaigns in the Balkans. The source material reports that in 948 the most important Magyar nobles were on a diplomatic visit to Constantinople where they were received with the highest honours, possibly, similar to how the Princess Olga of Rus was welcomed. The fact that the Byzantines used the method set forth in *On Envoys*, the method of *impressment*, is indisputable, since it is indicated that they were not only conferred with the aulic title of *patrikios* and with great riches, but some of them were also personally baptized by the Byzantine emperor.[1023] Although a treaty was concluded with the Rus in 944, nevertheless, the sources do not provide information about the method which was used during negotiations. However, knowing that the Byzantine diplomacy was based on hospitality and impressing foreign envoys with honours and gifts, the use of these in this case cannot be excluded, since the negotiations which ended in a peace treaty started after a large amount of gold, silver and robes were bestowed.[1024]

Nikephoros II Phokas' deliberate diplomatic incident with the Bulgarian envoys in 966 opened the way to a direct military confrontation with Bulgaria. In order to ensure certain victory in the upcoming conflict, Kalokyros, the son of the proteuon of Cherson, previously honoured with the title of patrikios, was sent to Svyatoslav, the prince of the Rus, to persuade him to attack the Bulgarians from beyond the Danube, bringing with him gold coins in the amount of 15 kentenaria, imperial aulic titles and numerous precious gifts which were supposed to help facilitate the negotiations. This indicates that

"Flight" of Prince Časlav from Bulgaria", *Studia Ceranea* 6 (2016): 129-138, Časlav, as well, accepted Byzantine hegemony. *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 118, reports on the war that Časlav waged in Srem against the Magyars. For Živković, *Portreti vladara*, 68-71, and Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 280, the reason behind the Magyars' passivity in the Balkans between 934 and 943 should be sought in the military activities of Časlav.

1021 Archdeacon Thomas, *History of the Bishops*, 61. According to Budak, "Croatia and Byzantium in the Tenth Century", 218, this probably happened before 976. See also Ančić, "The Waning of the Empire", 20.

1022 For the political ends of the Byzantines in Budak, "Croatia and Byzantium in the Tenth Century", 218-219.

1023 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.; *DAI*, 40.63-65.

1024 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 73.

the Byzantines were, in fact, determined to achieve the intended goal by applying the usual methods, by bestowing gold, titles and gifts, namely by impressing Svyatoslav and his retinue.[1025] The reason why the Byzantine government chose Kalokyros, and not someone else, as their envoy on this mission, which took place during 966-967, should be sought in the fact that he was a prominent person who came from Cherson, a city whose population had frequent contacts with the northern peoples and collected information which were extremely important for the security of the Byzantine capital. Therefore, it can be assumed that Kalokyros was the correct choice to represent the Byzantine Empire in the negotiations with the prince of Rus, because apart from good rhetorical skills,[1026] it is plausible that he also had respectable knowledge of the Russian language, culture and customs. The events that followed are evidence enough of his negotiating qualities.[1027]

During the conflict with the Rus in the Balkans, sources state that the Byzantine government, apart from a military confrontation in the battlefield, also conducted negotiations in an attempt to force them to conclude a truce and return peacefully to their country. Although in his *Synopsis Historion* Skylitzes reports only on the peace concluded after the final defeat of the Rus in 971 at Dorostolon,[1028] unlike him, Leo the Deacon[1029] and *The Russian Primary Chronicle* report on a frequent diplomatic contacts, as well as on implementation of the appeasement policy through offering concessions and the method of *impressment* represented by the bestowment of large amount of gold and rich gifts,[1030] but also on the method of *intimidation* shown through underlining events from the past which were related to the enemy's leader,[1031] before the signing of this peace treaty.

There are also indications of possible diplomatic negotiations in the mission of the unnamed Serbian envoys who visited the emperor Basileios II while he was in his military camp during the last decade of the 10th century, more precisely in 992/993. Although it cannot be confirmed in the sources, it can be assumed that they arrived from Diocleia, due to the fact that from all of Samuil's neighbours, it was closest to its capital and felt highly threatened by the aggressive policy of the Kometopoulos and, similar as the Byzantine Empire, was possibly interested to prevent his further military advances. However, if one observes the military and political constellation in the Balkans in the period preceding this delegation, it can be noted that Samuil's main activities were di-

1025 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 265.; *Leo the Deacon*, 111.

1026 *Leo the Deacon*, 128, reports that Kalokyros persuaded Svyatoslav not only with rich gifts, but also with "... tempting words".

1027 *Leo the Deacon*, 128-129.

1028 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 293.

1029 *Leo the Deacon*, 153.

1030 *The Russian Primary Chronicl*e, 88-89.

1031 *Leo the Deacon*, 156-157.

rected towards the Byzantine provinces, with emphasis on the city of Thessalonica and its surroundings. This military activity of the Kometopoulos indicates that at that given moment the Byzantine government was probably more concerned to stop his raiding and campaigns of conquest than the prince of Diocleia. The gap which exists in the sources regarding the evidence of any campaigns of Samuil towards the Serbian principalities before this embassy was sent is also confirmation about this assumption. Even the Priest of Diocleia does not report about any military campaigns of Samuil in the region of the Serbian principalities. The only campaign that he had conducted and which is witnessed in his *Annals* was few years after the Serbian envoys had been sent, and its character was more of a punitive expedition than of any raid or campaign of conquest.[1032] Hence, it can be concluded that the unnamed Serbian delegation which arrived at Basileios II was, in fact, a response to a previous Byzantine diplomatic initiative, as it is evidenced not only by the events that followed their capture by the Arabs in the Aegean Sea, but also by the later campaign of Samuil towards Diocleia.

Actually, there are several factors which can explain in more details the reason why the Byzantines would establish diplomatic contacts with this Serbian principality. The first factor was the long-term friendly relationship that this country nurtured towards the Byzantine Empire, something that Skylitzes explicitly states in his work when he describes Jovan Vladimir's character, the ruler of Diocleia. The second is of a geopolitical nature. Unlike the Magyars and Pechenegs who lived beyond the Danube River,[1033] quite far from the centre of Samuil's State, Diocleia was a neighbour which, due to its proximity, was not only most threatened by Samuil's policy, but it could very easily and quickly, passing by the Adriatic coast and the *via Egnatia* road, exert a sudden military pressure not only on Dyrrachion, which was under the control of the Kometopoulos at that time,[1034] but also on Samuil's capital located in the region of Prespa at first, and later in the city of

[1032] The campaign was probably conducted as a consequence of the information Samuil received that diplomatic contacts were established between the Byzantine emperor and the prince of Diocleia.

[1033] Putting aside the Magyars and the Pechenegs from the Byzantine diplomatic plans was, probably, due to their distance from Samuil's capital in Prespa or Ohrid which made their military assistance in this case inefficient.

[1034] It can be assumed that the city of Dyrrachion was under the authority of Samuil since the beginning of the revolt and was handed over to him by *proteuon* Chryselios himself, who was a father to his wife. See Gjalevski, "Za brakot na Samuil i Agata", 78-89. Skylitzes' narration suggests that Dyrrachion was probably conquered after the battle at Spercheios which is highly unlikely due to Samuil's insufficient military force at that moment due to his catastrophic defeat. According to Pirivatrić, *Samuilova država*, 82-83, this city was possibly under Samuil's rule from the beginning of the revolt. For Antoljak, *Srednovekovna Makedonija* Tom I, 425, Samuil conquered the city of Dyrrachion between 986 and 993. According to Boškoski, *Velikanite*, 83, Dyrrachion was conquered by Samuil during 996/997. The same is assumed by Treadgold, *History*, 523, according to who Dyrrachion was under Samuil's authority by the end of the 10th century.

Ohrid. From a strategic point of view, a possible Serbian intervention from the northwest would relieve the pressure from the Byzantine military forces located around Thessalonica, which would then have freedom to manoeuvre and allow for a simultaneous attack on Samuil's realm from two sides.

Although the narrative in the sources, primarily Skylitzes, leads to the conclusion that the decades-long conflict of the Byzantine Empire with Samuil was exclusively of a military nature, nevertheless, there is enough information which indicates that it was intertwined with diplomatic correspondence and negotiations.[1035] Apart from the direct communication with Samuil which was conducted before the military campaign towards Serdica had commenced and after the Byzantine victory at the river Spercheios, or with Jovan Vladislav immediately after the death of the Kometopoulos, there are also numerous negotiations noted in the sources which were conducted with Samuil's commanders of fortresses and towns while the imperial army was besieging these.[1036]

What can be concluded from the sources is that the diplomatic negotiations conducted with Samuil and his successors were mostly from a position of strength by implementing the method of *intimidation* on the enemy and by intensifying impatience among the members of the elite in his state. This can be clearly observed in the diplomatic correspondence which took place before the start of the Byzantine campaign aimed at Serdica and ended unsuccessfully with the Byzantine defeat at the battle of Trajan's Gate, where the emperor asked Samuil and the other archons in his country "...to come and prostrate themselves before his imperial majesty...",[1037] as well as in the negotiations with Jovan Vladislav which were reported by the Priest of Diocleia, and where the impatience between him and Gavril Radomir was emphasized.

As for the negotiations with Samuil's commanders of the fortresses and cities, the sources report that during these diplomatic contacts, emperor Basileios II used on the opponent the method of *impressment*.[1038] One such example is the mission of the envoy Sergios who was sent by Basileios II to the city of Melnikos in 1014. He was an excellent orator and an exceptional negotiator who apparently used the standard Byzantine principles of persuasion of the enemy: extolling the character traits of the opponent, Christian ethics, or offering bribes disguised as imperial favours, because Skylitzes indicates that the emperor "...rewarded them accordingly..."[1039] after they accepted his authority. There is also a possibility that the method of *intimidation* was used as well. This method, in fact,

1035 Gjalevski, "Byzantine politics", 65-77.
1036 Dragan Gjalevski, "Byzantine diplomacy and Samuel's State", *Glasnik* 61, no.1 (2017): 59-72.
1037 *Matthew of Edessa*, 40.
1038 For Dobromir and Roman, commanders of Berroea and Skopje, see Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 326, 328.
1039 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 333.

was extremely effective against the enemy, especially after a major military defeat had been inflicted on him, for instance right after the battle of Kleidion, an event which probably had an additional psychological effect after it was realized that on the orders of the Byzantine emperor the blinding of the prisoners of war has been committed.[1040]

What can be concluded is that the Byzantine diplomatic missions in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe were numerous and a significant part of these are not recorded in the sources. They indicate that most of the time the envoys who were sent on a mission by the imperial government achieved the goals that were set, although dispatching their best negotiator did not guarantee a quick success during the negotiations. A typical example of this is the mission of Leon Choerosphactès in Bulgaria. It took several travels, correspondence and difficult negotiations for this Byzantine envoy to finally succeed to negotiate a treaty with Simeon. However, it should be noted that although rare, there have been cases where the Byzantine envoys have been unsuccessful in achieving their mission objectives. One such example was the diplomatic mission of the priest Gabriel to the Magyars.[1041]

In achieving the goal, the envoys adhered to the basic principles set forth in *On Envoys* and in most of the diplomatic missions they used the method of *impressment*, in some cases together with the policy of appeasement of the enemy through offering certain concessions. The second method, the method of *intimidation*, was actually used only in moments when the situation allowed it i.e., when the Byzantine Empire had military and political supremacy, or when there was a need to emphasize the benefits which the enemy would receive if he signed a peace treaty, and which were presented to him during negotiations through the method of *impressment*.

Rhetoric and oratory skills

According to the statement of the author of *On Envoys*, one of the most important qualities of any eminent successful envoy was his ability to "...speak with respect of both their own country and that of the enemy and never speak disparagingly of it".[1042] There is more than one definition of the art of oration, of rhetoric. According to these, it is perceived as a treatise on the art of persuasive, or impressive, writing or speaking, language intended to persuade or impress i.e., persuasiveness of looks and acts, often with implica-

[1040] Ibid, 331.
[1041] *DAI*, 8.25-27.
[1042] On Strategy, 43.27-29.

tions of insincerity. Presented in a late Byzantine context, rhetoric is "...the art that deals with the power of the word in political matters, whose purpose is persuasive argument against the prevailing view".[1043]

The art of speaking or writing efficiently with an intention of persuading someone, especially through the use of figures of speech and other techniques, was highly valued in the ancient world, and probably since the beginning of international relations itself. The anonymous author of the 5th century *Prolegomena to Rhetoric* notes that the function of rhetoric varied depending on the type of government. According to him "...among the ancient Lacedaemonians rhetoric served the aims of oligarchy; among the Athenians, democracy; we practice it in faith and orthodoxy under an empire".[1044] Although it had a strong influence on literary art, it was not limited to it. For someone to be able to serve in the Byzantine bureaucracy, he had to be educated in the art of rhetoric.[1045] The imperial government, starting with Diocletian, pronounced its decrees in a rhetorical style to make them more solemn and memorable. Until the last days of the Byzantine Empire, the government continued this practice, and besides the panegyrics, the most notable example are the preambles of the imperial chrysobulls. In their most prosperous days, as well as in their most penurious, in victory and in defeat, the Byzantine elite never abandoned the study and practice of classical rhetoric.[1046]

Byzantine sources unequivocally point to the fact that for the most part, the envoys were exceptionally skilled in oratory i.e., those who had passed their education (παιδεία) which included the study of rhetoric. So, for example, Menander conveys part of the oratory delivered during negotiations by the Byzantine envoys Theodorus, Zacharias and Valentinus from the end of the 6th century, the first two sent to the Sasanian Empire, while the third to the Turks in central Asia, from which it can be seen that they were skilled orators.[1047] Also, in his *Synopsis* Skylitzes notes how Ioannes Grammatikos, who "...was experienced in affairs of state and highly skilled in debating..." was sent on a mission to Baghdad by the emperor Theophilus, where he "...greatly distinguished himself by the words which smoothly flowed from his lips".[1048] Constantine the Philosopher was

[1043] Elizabeth Jeffreys, "Rhetoric", in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, eds. Elizabeth Jeffreys, John F. Haldon, and Robin Cormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 827.

[1044] George L. Kustas, "The Function and Evolution of Byzantine Rhetoric", *Viator* 1 (1971): 55.

[1045] Emmanuel C. Bourbouhakis, "Rhetoric and Performance", in *The Byzantine World*, ed. Paul Stephenson (London/New York: Routledge, 2009), 175.; Kustas, "The Function and Evolution", 64.

[1046] George T. Dennis, "Imperial Panegyric: Rhetoric and Reality", in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829-1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 131.; Elizabeth Jeffreys, "Rhetoric in Byzantium", in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, ed. Ian Worthington (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 166-178.

[1047] *Menander*, 18.6.58-61, 19.1.56-60, 19.1.91-117, 26.1.59-71, 26.1.112-132.

[1048] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 58-59. For the mission see Magdalino, "The Road to Baghdad", 196-198.

also sent on a mission to Baghdad by the emperor who wished the Holy Trinity to "...give him blessing and strength in the word...and may he bring you back to us, worthy of the kingdom of heaven". That Constantine had high rhetorical skills is indicated by the statement of the Byzantine emperor before he was sent again on a diplomatic mission, this time to Khazaria, as "...no one else can do it worthily...", and also by the incidents with the Magyars who "...heard instructive words from his lips...", as well with the Khazar official, or during the reception with the khagan of Khazaria.[1049] Other Byzantine officials who had high education and became diplomatic envoys were Niketas Magistros, the *protovestiarios* Theophanes and Ioannes Mystikos, who was also an *anthypatos* and *patrikios*, and who was on a mission in Baghdad during 946,[1050] and for whom al-Mas'udi declared that "... this man has clear judgment and a wide field of knowledge in the history of the kings of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as of their modern philosophers and their philosophical systems and theories".[1051] In his text *Embassy* Liudprand of Cremona conveys, presented from his angle of perception obviously, several conversations that he had with the Byzantine government where he shows not only his rhetorical skills but also retells those of the emperor and his officials.[1052] Leo the Deacon declares that Kalokyros, the son of the *proteuon* of the city of Cherson, who was sent on a mission to Svyatoslav, the prince of Rus, managed to attract him not only with gifts, but also with "...tempting words...", which points to the fact that he was undoubtedly well versed in the art of rhetoric.[1053]

Bearing in mind the role that the highly educated Byzantines had in the spheres of imperial administration and culture, it should not be surprising that the most educated people in science and current state affairs were also involved in the diplomatic missions. They were well versed in rhetoric and oratory, the two best tools of persuasion available to the Byzantine government. When envoys were sent on a mission, they had not only to convey greetings through official speech, but also to present and improvise arguments in various debates which were often unpredictable and not foreseen by the government in Constantinople.[1054] One such example is the embassy to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz where the Byzantine envoy was approached "...from an angle which came as a surprise to him and which his master did not know he would be asked about".[1055] Through their own

[1049] *Panonski legendi*, 32, 37, 39-40.
[1050] Nike Koutrakou, "Logos and Pathos between Peace and War: Rhetoric as a tool of Diplomacy in the Middle Byzantine Period", *Thesaurismata* 25 (1995): 9.
[1051] Marius Canard, "Les relations politiques et sociales entre Byzance et les Arabes", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964): 40.
[1052] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 241-244, 246-250, 253-255.
[1053] *Leo the Deacon*, 128.
[1054] Koutrakou, "Logos and Pathos", 10.
[1055] Stern, "An embassy", 249.

rhetorical skills, the envoys had to allow the following: to prepare the ground for negotiations by nullifying any hostile attitudes which might exist on the part of the second party, to convince the foreign ruler and his advisors of the benevolence of the emperor and his policies, to establish a clear course of action by using the political opportunities that would arise during negotiation process which would finish with achievement of the set ends, whether it was exchange of prisoners, conducting of a peace treaty or a military alliance, or to prevent some future conflict.[1056] Similar proactive role for the Byzantine envoys is shown by the author of *On Envoys*, who advises that they "...must be able to arrange things properly, to take advantage of opportunities, but not to employ pressure to carry out their assignment, unless it is something they have been ordered to get done at any cost".[1057]

As already indicated, in their quest to convince their political opponents, the Byzantine envoys used all forms which existed according to Aristotle's rhetoric to prove their claims. It implied application of techniques named as ethos (ἔθος), logos (λόγος) and pathos (πάθος). *Ethos* refers to the status or authority of the speaker, to his moral credibility, making it more likely that listeners will believe his words. This technique was extremely important, due to the fact that, after all, envoys were personification of the Byzantine emperor and all his virtues. In contrast to the *ethos*, the other two rhetorical forms were extremely refined by the Byzantine diplomacy. *Logos* appeals to the audience's reason, the building of logical arguments. Argumentation usually followed a schema, model, or a pattern, so that it first made a focal point of general influence, followed by a gradual narrowing of the debate in relation to the issue under discussion. In diplomatic letters, it is most often directed to the declaration of divine truth, as well as to peace, especially in difficult circumstances. *Pathos* appeals to emotions, trying to make the audience feel angry or sympathetic, for example, and represented the pinnacle of the envoys' attempts to persuade the other side often in form of an impassioned appeal for peace and justice on behalf of the people.[1058]

Exceptionally good examples recorded in the sources of the high rhetorical skills among Byzantine envoys of the 9th and 10th centuries are those of Constantine the Philosopher, Leon Choerosphactès, Nikolaos Mystikos and Theodoros Daphnopates, the first who, among other things, was an all-Slavic educator, the second an administrative official and a member of emperor's inner circle, the third was patriarch of the church in Constantinople, while the last was a high imperial official. Of all of them, the last three took an

[1056] Koutrakou, "Logos and Pathos", 11-12.
[1057] On Strategy, 43.30-32.
[1058] Koutrakou, "Logos and Pathos", 14-19.

active part in the Byzantine diplomacy in the Balkans and their rhetorical skill is known to us through the preserved written correspondence.

Despite the fact that Constantine the Philosopher is mostly known for his mission in Moravia, he was before, by order of the emperor, sent twice on a diplomatic mission, first time to Baghdad, and the second time to the Khazars. Although his *Life* states that the mission to the Arabs was intended to respond to Muslim criticism of the faith and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and thus to maintain the position of the Byzantine emperor as the sole guardian of the Christians, the real reason was exchange of captives and signing a truce. The actual hagiographic emphasis on the skills of Constantine the Philosopher was intended to combine the two patriotic elements, the game of diplomatic attraction and the defeat of Arabian intellectuals with the innate Roman wisdom and rhetoric, which is clearly observed in the text about his life.[1059] The situation is identical to the mission to the Khazars where, according to this same biography, he was sent again to defend the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from criticism. The rhetorical skills of Constantine the Philosopher are again glorified. However, if one ignores the focus of the narrative in the biography, the statement of the Byzantine emperor that he was sent to Khazaria "... honourably with imperial support..." indicates that it was, as it was in Baghdad, a typical diplomatic mission with political purpose of freeing prisoners, and the support that Constantine received from the government were, probably, numerous precious gifts intended for the ruler of this steppe state. That this was, in fact, the real reason for which he was sent beyond the Black Sea, is indicated by his request to the khagan of the Khazars to hand over to him as many Roman captives as he had.[1060]

As a member of a wealthy family, Leon Choerosphactès had the opportunity to acquire an education suitable for position in the imperial bureaucracy. He was versed in the classical works as well as the scriptures, but he also had knowledge of Neoplatonic philosophy, astrology as well as theology.[1061] This education allowed him to be part of the inner circle of figures at the court of Emperor Leon VI.[1062] If the career of Leon Choerosphactès is analysed, it is more than clear that it was not only typical of an envoy, but it also shows that he was highly valued and positioned in the Byzantine bureaucracy and the imperial court. At the time of his missions in Bulgaria and Baghdad he was a *patrikios* and *magistros*. In fact, Basileios I granted him the title of *mystikos*,[1063] and during his

[1059] *Panonski legendi*, 32-36. For the real purpose see Magdalino, "The Road to Baghdad", 202.
[1060] For more details see *Panonski legendi*, 37-51.
[1061] *Léon Choerosphactès*, 64-65.
[1062] Paul Magdalino, "In search of the Byzantine courtier: Leo Choirosphaktes and Constantine Manasses", in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829-1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 146-148.
[1063] Oikonomides, *Les Listes*, 324.

service under Leon VI he had the titles of *anthypatos* and *patrikios* by which he signed his correspondence. While the title of *patrikios* was exclusively an honorary title during the 9th and 10th centuries, in this period the title of magistros was awarded only to those who were already *patrikios*, was granted to the person for life,[1064] and had a close connection to diplomatic activities. In the preserved letters of Choerosphactès, the *patrikios* Genesios names him as "greatest of the envoys",[1065] while on the other hand, the *spatharios* Procopios as "the greatest mediator between the two nations".[1066]

A total of fourteen letters from the diplomatic mission of Leon Choerosphactès to Bulgaria after the Byzantine defeat at Boulgarophygon have been preserved. They include letters not only from the Byzantine envoy, but also from the Bulgarian *knyaz*. All were written during Leon's captivity at Mundraga and are indicated to be a collection intended, presumably, for an audience of Constantinople intellectuals and courtiers, such as Choerosphactès himself was, a kind of presentation of the Byzantine imperial ideology in parallel with his personal presentation as an exceptional envoy.[1067] Regarding the letters, of all of these only the first ten are a direct subsequent conversation between Leon Choerosphactès and Simeon where the focus was on the request for release of the Byzantine prisoners of war. In order to achieve this goal, Choerosphactès uses various literary and rhetorical techniques of expression in his letters. Apart from the active indication of the Bulgarian ruler's affiliation to Christian faith, which, along with the presentation of its ethical teachings and beliefs, were in fact an indispensable diplomatic oratorical technique in medieval Europe,[1068] in some of these letters Choerosphactès writes about Simeon's character traits. He puts forth high moral values on him, not only as a man, but also as a ruler. Expressed with a rhetorical technique that exalted his personality and goodness, his *philanthropy*, these moral values were, in fact, supposed to influence Simeon to accept the "just" demands of the Byzantine Empire.[1069] The letters of Leon Choerosphactès clearly indicate that the imperial envoys actively used knowledge of classical sciences in official negotiations which they had acquired during their education. The discussion which took place over the semantics in the written diplomatic correspondence

[1064] Weller, *Imagining Pre-Modern Imperialism*, 79.
[1065] *Léon Choerosphactès*, 92.
[1066] Ibid, 96.
[1067] Weller, *Imagining Pre-Modern Imperialism*, 85, 88.
[1068] *Léon Choerosphactès*, 82.
[1069] Intended to convince the Bulgarian ruler to release the prisoners of war, *Léon Choerosphactès*, 76, 82, indicates that he would have done so "...according to the example of your most divine father [Boris]. Because who could force you to do that, you, who wage an internal and voluntary fight against evil and have an opinion contrary to it?" He further reports that "...you [Simeon in yourself] possess righteousness and charity". See also Koutrakou, "Logos and Pathos", 19.

and its punctuation, a kind of grammatical deception,[1070] in an attempt to lure and thus force Simeon to release the captives is sufficient, yet unique,[1071] evidence of that.

Next example of the implementation of rhetoric in diplomacy is the Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos. From the letters that he sent to Simeon which survive to this day, it can be concluded that his primary goal was to try to manage and control the Bulgarian threats to the Byzantine Empire, whether they were ideological or military in nature. They are rhetorical and extremely stylized, something that would be expected from a person who held a high position in the state, and the letters are an excellent example of a high-level Byzantine epistolographic prose. It is pointed out that the rhetoric of Nikolaos Mystikos was clearly and directly aimed in his attempts to delineate the difference which existed on the ideological level between the Byzantine imperial and Bulgarian archon power. The narrative in his letters to Simeon indicates that he treated him, if not as an equal, then at least as a rhetorically skilled correspondent.[1072]

Unlike Leon Choerosphactès' letter collection, in the case of Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos, not a single letter from Simeon has been preserved. Most of the letters are lengthy and include serious discussions of a political and spiritual nature, where both topics are frequently described and explained through biblical and philosophical references.[1073] They dwell on the control which Nikolaos Mystikos wanted to establish over Simeon's activities by referring to the position he held as a Christian ruler within the Byzantine "hierarchy of states". The patriarch of Constantinople pointed out several times in his letters that in order for a Christian ruler to be good and respected, he had to maintain his loyalty to the Byzantine Empire and its order, because Simeon received from his father Boris an ἀρχη, not a βασιλεὶα, which belonged to the *basileus*. Furthermore, it is rightly pointed out that Nikolaos Mystikos rhetoric was, in fact, evidently aimed at his attempts to demarcate and clarify to Simeon the difference which existed between the already established statements regarding the Byzantine imperial and Bulgarian archon power.[1074]

1070 *Léon Choerosphactès*, 78-82.

1071 See Antony R. Littlewood, "An 'Icon of the Soul': The Byzantine Letter," *Visible Language* 10 (1976): 211. for Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria – Peacemaker", 18, these letters are evidence of the Bulgarian ruler's penchant for playing with words, and his participation in the rhetorical game with Choerosphactès reveals the depths of the education he acquired. Tougher, *Reign of Leo VI*, 180-181, suggests that these letters indicate that the actual negotiations for peace and for the prisoners were between Simeon and Leon VI, while Simeon and Choerosphactès only sparred rhetorically. Weller, *Imagining Pre-Modern Imperialism*, 94, points out that the collection of letters of Leon Choerosphactès is a source through which one can examine not only his activities as a Byzantine envoy, but also how he presented these activities to the people of Constantinople. When writing to Simeon of Bulgaria he was not so much engaged in active diplomacy as he wanted to present a picture of that diplomacy.

1072 Weller, *Imagining Pre-Modern Imperialism*, 90-91.

1073 Ibid, 110.

1074 Nicholas, *Letters*, 18, 25. For analysis see Weller, *Imagining Pre-Modern Imperialism*, 111.

In terms of rhetoric, language and style, the first letter which was sent to Simeon before the start of the conflict in 913 corresponds to the established norms of diplomatic correctness and rhetorical techniques that should have been used by the Byzantine envoys during missions. Through a sophisticated level of moderation in his own statements and remarks, while making full use of his education, Nikolaos Mystikos aimed to persuade the Bulgarian ruler to call off the impending attack. In the letter he often flattered Simeon and praised him not only as a human being, but also as an excellent ruler and Christian.[1075] Furthermore, he appealed to the Christian moral values which should not only rebuke and intimidate Simeon, but also warn him of the injustice of his act because he wanted to attack "...and usurp upon an innocent who has done you no harm whatsoever, an infant and an orphan, the son of an emperor, and without considering how abominable usurpation is in the eyes of God and men".[1076] Apart from the Christian teachings, as well as the Byzantine political theory about the divine origin of the power of the Byzantine emperor, in an attempt to induce the Bulgarian ruler to give up his intention to sit on the Byzantine throne (Nikolaos Mystikos was convinced that this was the real goal of Simeon), for the reason that he did not have any ideological basis for it, the patriarch of Constantinople also used historical facts as a diplomatic argument.[1077]

In the letter sent after the Byzantine defeat at Katasyrtai and Acheloos in 917, it can be noted that despite the haughty rhetoric of Nikolaos Mystikos at certain moments, as a whole, it represented a dignified document. Full of strong emotions and apologetic tones, ethics and historical arguments related to the Christian teaching, this letter was intended to influence Simeon, his "spiritual son", to reconsider his own conception of any further military actions against his Christian brothers. Nikolaos Mystikos presents an argument, using the logos technique, that war between two Christian states was the greatest evil and urged the Bulgarian ruler on the basis of the previous friendship to conclude not only peace, but also "holy peace".[1078] Furthermore, the patriarch publicly acknowledges the regency's wrong move to attack the Bulgarian state, but also patronizingly suggests that it was done in self-defence due to persistent reports of Bulgarian attempts to form a military alliance with the Pechenegs. With this he wanted to indicate that part of the blame for the shameful war between the two Christian states was also held by Simeon.[1079] In an attempt to point out the absurdity of Simeon's claim for hegemony in the Christian

[1075] According to Nicholas, *Letters*, 5.11-121, Simeon was the most pious, the most faithful, the most-Christian, the righteous, a prince appointed by God who loves piety and takes delight in truth.
[1076] Nicholas, *Letters*, 5.18-21, 5.66.
[1077] Ibid, 5.127-143.
[1078] Ibid, 9.22, 27.79, 27.85.
[1079] For the correspondence see Nicholas, *Letters*, 9.48-263.

oecumene, which was devoid of any ideological foundation, patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos used historical facts as argument, which, with the help of Christian teachings, actually emphasized the divine protection that the Byzantine government possessed.[1080]

Through the preserved correspondence of Nikolaos Mystikos, it can be observed that the diplomatic tone was polite, with respect towards Simeon, but at the same time calm and determined, dignified, meek, at times patronizing and threatening. The letters sent by messengers (ἀποκρισιάριος) were as usual full of appropriate epithets for the personality of the Bulgarian ruler,[1081] but also full of rhetoric intertwined with Christian ethics, myths, family values and historical facts.[1082] Conceived in this way, they had to convince Simeon of the need for peace with the Byzantine Empire.[1083] However, due to the intention of the Bulgarian ruler to conquer the Byzantine throne,[1084] the diplomatic activities entered the realm of ideology and political theory regarding the origin of imperial power. Therefore, it can be noted that parallel to the negotiations for truce, in all of the letters which were sent, the patriarch's effort to explain the ideological basis for the origin of the authority of the *basileus of the Romans* in relation to that of the ordinary *archon*, in this case the authority of Simeon, is highlighted. The views that Nikolaos Mystikos presented in the letters, which were mainly explained through various rhetorical phrases and Christian argumentation, and at the same time supported by various moral criteria and historical facts,[1085] represented diplomatic arguments through which it was necessary not only to convince the Bulgarian ruler to abandon his intention to take over the Byzantine throne, but at the same time to agree to sign a peace treaty as soon as possible which, in fact, would be shaped according to the already established Byzantine doctrine of "family of kinship".

The content of the correspondence of Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos to Simeon, written by Theodoros Daphnopates in the period from 925 to 926, is very different from the one that Nikolaos Mystikos had sent earlier. Rhetorically, it reports of a strong, decisive and authoritative tone of the imperial government, completely different from that just years ago, despite the fact that Simeon is named as spiritual brother of the Byzantine emperor who was also related to him in faith.[1086] In the letters, the reigning emperor

[1080] Nicholas, *Letters*, 10.49-51, instructs Simeon not to try to become lord of those "...by whom you [Bulgarians] were accorded your liberty".

[1081] Often, monks were also sent as messengers who were supposed to influence the Bulgarian ruler through their sanctity, as reported by Nicholas, *Letters*, 14.140, 21.201, 27.87-88.

[1082] About the content of the letters in Nicholas, *Letters*, 20.29-20.156.

[1083] Bozhilov, *Vizantiiskiiat Sviat*, 384.

[1084] This goal, according to Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria – Peacemaker", 37-46, was formed in 917.

[1085] Simeonova, "The Short Fuse", 90.

[1086] Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 6.2, 6.22, 7.9-10, 7.44, 7.75.

Romanos I Lekapenos expresses with a great deal of dominance and superiority his own displeasure at the Bulgarian disrespect of the truce agreed upon a year earlier, concluded personally between the two rulers. Unlike during the previous period, now the Byzantine emperor dictated the terms of the truce, and in a highly commanding manner. Peace, according to the statement of Romanos I, could only be achieved if Simeon returned to the Byzantine Empire all the territories, cities and fortresses conquered before 913. In return, he would have been paid the tribute which had been agreed upon in the time of Leon VI, plus the already approved hundred *skaramangion*.[1087]

Through Christian ethics, strong rhetoric and presentation of historical facts from the recent past, in his second letter to Simeon, Romanos I Lekapenos opposes the arbitrary use of the title of *basileus of the Bulgarians and Romans* by the Bulgarian ruler and points to the ideological groundlessness of this step according to which, if "...someone really needed to be called emperor of the Romans and Bulgarians, that's what we should have called ourselves preferably".[1088] As an additional argument he points to the numerous Bulgarian subjects who fled the Bulgarian land and settled in the "peaceful" Byzantine Empire.[1089] Romanos I Lekapenos sent an appeal for peace and justice to Simeon, using the rhetorical technique of *pathos*, so that he would reject his cruel methods by imitating Christ and Christian love.[1090] The reason for such a strong diplomatic reaction from Romanos I Lekapenos was the preservation of the ideological legitimacy of the *basileus* as the sole sovereign of the *oecumene*, leader of the "family of rulers", guardian of the Church and protector of the "Chosen People". In other words, this position gave legitimacy to the Byzantine emperor for an indisputable political right to impose hegemony over the Balkans.

What can be concluded from the implementation of rhetoric and its techniques in diplomacy, such as *ethos, pathos* and *logos*, is that although eloquent speech and fine writing had some influence in the overall process of informal diplomatic conversations and official negotiations, however, they could not independently make a positive breakthrough during these diplomatic activities which were conducted with the opposite party and led to the realization of the outlined political and military interests and ends. What rhetoric actually could and should have done in this whole process, among other things, was to allow the "smoothing of the edges" if it was noticed and determined that there was some hostile environment on the other side during the informal diplomatic conversations and official negotiations.

[1087] Ibid, 5.140.
[1088] Ibid, 5.20-63, 6.69-70.
[1089] Ibid, 5.42-45.
[1090] Ibid, 5.10-11.

Correspondence

Similar to rhetoric, epistolography, the art of writing letters, was also widespread among the intellectual elite in the Byzantine Empire. Numerous letters (ἐπιστολή) from Byzantine emperors, bureaucrats, bishops, soldiers, monks, teachers, lawyers, rhetors and from imperial women have been preserved. In their essence, letters possess literary value, and this literary value and quality was clearly recognized and acknowledged by the Byzantines themselves, although they did not have a rich theoretical tradition and were not educated in the school on how to write a letter. Actually, each letter is simultaneously a communicative act between the author and the audience, a rhetorical exercise and, especially in the context of reception, a social object embedded in the community that interprets it. Byzantine letters were valued both according to artistic and social values they had. Their world was the world of the ecclesiastical and secular administration of the Byzantine Empire. Exchange of letters between these individuals connected them in a social and intellectual community which, although centred and dependent on Constantinople, where they all received the education that ensured their admission to the group, extended beyond the metropolis and the Empire, at all times when an individual was leaving abroad for state or church assignment.[1091]

Apart from the fact that the letter represented a social object which connected two people and received its meaning through a certain process of ritualization, it was also inherent to it to be a rhetorical object.[1092] Here, rhetorical primarily refers to the practical sense of writing, or speech intended to persuade, as well as in the sense that writing was part of the learned traditions of formal rhetoric in the Byzantine Empire. Letter writing was part of the introductory rhetorical exercises and rhetorical manuals, and together with *encomia* and *panegyric*, represented the basis for education that a Byzantine official should have.[1093] Due to the absence of a reliable postal service, which in the period between the 9th and 11th centuries had significantly decreased since the time of the Roman *cursus publicus*, or even the late antique period, letters were transmitted from the author to the recipient by letter carriers. These letter carriers (κομιστές), carried the scroll to the recipient, a process described

[1091] Margaret Mullett, "Epistolography", in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, eds. Elizabeth Jeffreys, John F. Haldon, and Robin Cormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 882-893; Stratis Papaioannou, "Letter-writing", in *The Byzantine World*, ed. Paul Stephenson (London/New York: Routledge, 2009), 188-199.; Weller, *Imagining Pre-Modern Imperialism*, 37-38.

[1092] Sofia Kotzabassi, "Epistolography and Rhetoric", in *A Companion to Byzantine Epistolography*, ed. Alexander Riehle (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 177-195.

[1093] Weller, *Imagining Pre-Modern Imperialism*, 38.

through an illustration in Skylitzes' *Synopsis Historion*. They sometimes brought more than the letter itself and it was accompanied with gifts, such as food, various art, books, etc.[1094] The *comistes* could also carry an oral message, which often held the most important part of the communication between the writer and the recipient of the letter. From the letters of Nikolaos Mystikos, it can be noted that letter carriers could carry the same message as the text in the letter - but emphasize different aspects of that message. In the sixth letter sent to Simeon of Bulgaria it is discussed about the oral response of the *comistes* who returned to the patriarch, and who wondered if they might have correctly reported about Simeon's antipathy and bloodthirstiness towards the Byzantine Empire, for he "...was greatly astonished and greatly grieved at these words, and wondered (if they spoke the truth, and if the whole was not a falsehood and deliberate fabrication of my informants) how you could think of such a thing or make such a remark".[1095]

As for its application in diplomacy, apart from imperial letters in the strict sense i.e., diplomatic official letters addressed to the rulers of foreign states and leaders of nations and tribes that were usually delivered by Byzantine envoys during their visits, there were also other types of diplomatic letters, for instance informal messages to members of foreign dynasties, or additional instructions to envoys that participated in negotiations. It is also necessary to note that apart from direct negotiations which were carried out through the diplomatic envoy who was sent specifically for that purpose, sometimes the circumstances required from the Byzantine government to communicate with the other party, to negotiate or impose their own, or reject other's terms, through written correspondence, like for example, the situation in the conflict with Bulgaria, as reported in the letters of Leon Choerosphactès and Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos.[1096] All these diplomatic letters, in the 7th and 8th century are named as σάκρα or sacra iussio, and in the 9th and 10th century these are named in the sources only with the general term γράμμα i.e., letter, without any further explanation.[1097] The letter, in its essence, represented a kind of a written version

[1094] Margaret Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid. Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), 32, n.98.

[1095] Nicholas, *Letters*, 6.46-54.

[1096] For more details on the role and importance of the letter in Byzantine diplomacy, see Margaret E. Mullett, "The language of diplomacy", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992), 203-216.; Lounghis, *Les ambassades*, 371-398.; Michael McCormick, "La letter diplomatique bizantien du premiere millénaire vue de l'Occident et l'énigme du papyrus de Paris", in *Byzance et le monde extérieur, Contacts, relations, échanges: Actes de trois séances du XXe Congrès international des Études byzantines, Paris, 19-25 août 2001*, ed. Michel Balard, Élisabeth Malamut, Jean-Michel Spieser (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2005), 135-149.

[1097] Alexander Beihammer, "Epistolography and Diplomatics", in *A Companion to Byzantine Epistolography*, ed. Alexander Riehle (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 203.

of the oral rhetoric that the envoy used during his mission.[1098] Anna Komnena points out in her *Alexiad* how frequent the letter was in Byzantine diplomacy, even though it refers to a later period,[1099] while Skylitzes' *Synopsis Historion*, on the other hand, reports on its implementation through a pictorial form.[1100] Regarding the period from the middle of the 9th until the beginning of the 11th century, it seems that written correspondence, however, was used much more often than it is attested in the source material, especially in relation to unofficial letters. It is necessary to note that this diplomatic practice includes not only the letters which had a political and military aspect, for instance the diplomatic mission of Leo of Synada to Rome,[1101] but also other numerous official letters that were transmitted by Byzantine messengers who were supposed to inform about holding of some important protocol event e.g., enthronement of a new Byzantine emperor, as Romanos II did,[1102] a birth of a child "born in purple", to convey friendly greetings, or to deliver an official invitation for an imperial ceremony or banquet in the Great Palace.

Apart from a few mentions by Skylitzes and the Priest of Diocleia[1103] which indicate the possible written contacts between the Byzantine Empire and its enemies in the Balkans and Pontic steppe, most of the evidence for the use of letters for diplomatic and military purposes by the Byzantine government comes from the correspondence of several influential people and envoys. It's the letters of Leon Choerosphactès about his diplomatic missions in Bulgaria, those of the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos with Simeon, as well as the correspondence of Theodoros Daphnopates on behalf of Romanos I Lekapenos. Nevertheless, even from this almost limited source of information, the reasons why the Byzantines used written correspondence with the states and tribes of the Balkans and the Pontic steppe during their diplomatic and military activities can be singled out as follows: conveying information, bringing discord into the ranks of the enemy, ending a military conflict, as well as conducting actual negotiations for a truce with the enemy through letters as a result of the difficult situation in which the envoy was placed.[1104]

1098 Koutrakou, "Logos and Pathos", 12.

1099 Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, ed. and tr. Elizabeth A. Dawes (London: Routledge, 1928).

1100 Mullett, "The language of diplomacy", 203-205.

1101 See *The Correspondence of Leo*, 1-13.

1102 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 470.19-471.2.

1103 This refers to the embassy of Basileios II sent to Jovan Vladislav after the death of Samuil and the reign of Gavril Radomir. Although the text resembles a kind of an anecdote, it nevertheless gives a definite picture of the way in which the imperial power used hatred as a diplomatic tool during a conflict. The notice itself of *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 127, indicates furthermore that the Byzantine officials handed a letter to Jovan Vladislav, rather than transmitting the message orally. The fact that the Byzantines knew how to provoke distrust among the enemy ranks is also brought up by Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, XIII.4. See also Mullett, "The language of diplomacy", 208.

1104 Shepard, "Imperial Information and Ignorance", 113-116.

What can be noted from the sources is that, generally speaking, there was no major difference between "private" and "diplomatic" letters, or with some of the imperial official documents. Apart from certain office markings and forms, the rest of the literary organization, the *dispositio*, of the diplomatic letter was same, if not identical, to the author's so-called "private" letters. Both types have a standard setting and defence of arguments according to the methods of classical rhetoric, the same quotations, the same style of speech, except that "diplomatic" letters are somewhat longer and try to present more details, facts and events, not only current but also past. In fact, the existence and maintenance of order (τάξις) of which the Byzantines strongly advocated,[1105] as well as the use of rhetorical techniques, can be observed throughout the entire diplomatic letter. If a comparison is made between the three authors of the letters which are the only source for the Byzantine written correspondence in the Balkans (more precisely with Bulgaria) i.e., those of Leon Choerosphactès, Nikolaos Mystikos or Theodoros Daphnopates, one can notice the existence of a certain protocol of friendship. Actually, if one analyses the language of the Byzantine diplomacy in which the letters were written, it can be said with certainty that it was undoubtedly the language of friendship.[1106] Regardless whose correspondence it was, or whether the letters were written from an inferior or from a superior position of strength, it is evident that the author had to maintain a high level of politeness and great respect. Furthermore, in these, the recipient of the letter was repetitively flattered and praised not only as a human, but also as a good ruler and a Christian. This is very clearly observed in the correspondence with the Bulgarian ruler Simeon, in spite of the conflict which the Byzantines had with him. It is necessary to note that the letters that were sent to the rulers of foreign states, nations and tribes were accompanied by gifts of various kinds, for example, musical pipe organ, elephants and gilded beds, precious fabrics, exclusive eunuchs and crowns.[1107]

In an attempt to justify these, but at the same time to indicate the righteousness of their own arguments, the authors of the letters used rhetorical phrases, quotations from the Bible, Christian teaching and faith, anecdotes, myths, moral and family values, as well as various misinformation, historical events from the recent or more distant past, [1108]the animosity and impatience among certain individuals in the ranks of the enemy, as well as other arguments which they thought would help them in achieving the objectives which were set forth. The frequency and skill of their use in letters, as well as success,

[1105] See Mullett, "The language of diplomacy", 212-213, 215, and Beihammer, "Epistolography and Diplomacy", 207-212.
[1106] Mullett, "The language of diplomacy", 214-215.
[1107] Ibid, 213-214.
[1108] Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 97.

mostly depended on the envoy himself, more precisely on his education, eloquence, insight and intelligence. An example of this is Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos who, due to his high education, but also the availability of information, in an attempt to defend the Byzantine position in the conflict with Simeon, unlike the letters of Leon Choerosphactès and Theodoros Daphnopates, apart from other forms of argumentation and justification of the Byzantine activities he also often used in his letters events from recent or distant history (although some of these were incorrect) with which he supported his own claims.

What was the real benefit of the written correspondence for the Byzantine diplomacy itself during the period from the middle of the 9th until the beginning of the 11th century, as well as in any other period, is difficult to reconstruct due to the lack of available evidence. However, from the preserved letters from the Byzantine-Bulgarian war in the first decades of the 10th century, it can be assumed that their use, apparently, for the most part had a very limited influence in the unfolding of the events themselves. Yet, despite this effect, letters still presented an exceptional tool not only for transmitting information, conducting secret operations, but also to maintain close diplomatic contact with the enemy during an ongoing conflict.

Treaties and ratification procedure: Balkans and Pontic steppe

What can be confirmed with certainty from the sources is that the Byzantine Empire had a policy of regulating its international relations with other polities through the use of its primary diplomatic tool, concluding treaties which ensured or extended peace, although when a swift end of hostilities, both military and political, was required, a simple oral oath was more than sufficient. The Byzantines were well aware that waging war could significantly drain the state resources and therefore they were declaring publicly that "...war is a great evil and the worst of all evils".[1109] Hence, the signing of a peace treaty was a primary concern of the Byzantine government when it came to regulating formal relations with extremely aggressive and hostile polities, thus allowing significant reduction of any future threat. Furthermore, numerous truces, agreements and treaties were concluded with polities who had friendly intentions, mostly with the Lombard duchies from Southern Italy, the Armenian principalities in Transcaucasia, or the Slavic principalities in the Balkans, a step through which the emperor brought them into his sphere of influence and regulated relations which were established between the two parties. Depending on the level of political and military might which the polities that established re-

[1109] On Strategy, 5.9.

lations with the Byzantine Empire had, a different political status was bestowed to them. According to the protocol for diplomatic correspondence written down in *The Book of Ceremonies*, states, nations and tribes that had concluded peace treaties were divided into those who received letters (γράμματα) and others who received orders (κέλευσις) from the Byzantine emperor.[1110] This division depended on the very essence of the concluded treaty i.e., on the arranged relations and obligations between the Byzantine Empire and the foreign state or tribe.

Peace (εἰρήνη) was the main desire of the Byzantine government, only possible if it would do no harm to the image of the emperor. Thus, the emperor himself, if his mandate was confirmed by victory, was called victory-bearer (νικηφόρος), but he was named as peace-bearer (ειρήνοποιος) as well. In contrast to the period of the early Byzantine Empire where different terms were used to denote a concluded treaty, as ἐκεχειρία or ξυνθήκη for a truce, εἰρήνη or σπονδή for an agreement with certain conditions, or διηνεκεῖς σπονδαί for eternal peace,[1111] during the Macedonian dynasty, the most commonly used term is εἰρήνη σπονδαί, which means a peace treaty, and only then συνθῆκαι, or just σπονδαί.[1112] The term πάκτον used by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos in *De Administrando Imperio* denoted, in my opinion, a treaty where one or both parties agreed and bounded themselves to provide some service or tribute, and were the Byzantine political supremacy remained intact.[1113]

The Byzantine sources do not present sufficient information about the content of the concluded treaties or the procedures which were followed during negotiation, ratification, signing and provision of guarantees for their implementation. Of all concluded treaties, only one contains the entire procedure described in detail, and that was the treaty between the Byzantine and Sasanian empires, signed in 562.[1114] For the rest of the treaties, either the statutes are mentioned without a clear picture of the negotiation process and its ratification, for which other sources are required, such as Arabic, Russian, Bulgarian, etc., or only the negotiations are mentioned, or that a treaty was concluded without presenting other, more detailed, information. Only the few peace treaties with the Rus which can be found in *The Russian Primary Chronicle* are more detailed. In fact, from the overall picture of all available sources, it can be concluded that the Byzantines did not sign special treaties to regulate only political, economic, or military relations with foreign states, nations and tribes, or just to conclude peace with them, but their policy was to regulate

1110 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 686-692.
1111 Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 109.
1112 Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 57.
1113 Gjalevski, "An Outline", 35.; Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 57.
1114 *Menander*, 6.163-429.

all possible relations between the two parties with only one treaty.[1115] From the numerous treaties referred to in the source materials, several provisions can be noted which covered and determined the various spheres of relations between the contracting parties, for instance political, military, economic, legal and diplomatic clauses, and in some of these there is existence of a religious clause, as well as of a clause for "fugitives, slaves and criminals".[1116] Although it cannot be confirmed with certainty, after the completion of the ratification procedure the signed document of the treaty was probably archived, because in a letter from Pope Gregory the Great to the Visigothic king Reccared in 599, the Pope replies to Reccared on his appeal to write to the Byzantine emperor Maurikios on his behalf and request from the imperial archive (cartofilacium) a copy of the treaty (pacta) concluded between Constantinople and the Visigoths during the reign of Justinian I, that there is no reason for doing this, since a fire during Justinian's reign had destroyed the relevant archive. The reliability of this statement of Pope Gregory is confirmed by the fact that he had spent some time in Constantinople as a papal legate, and thus, he would have been informed about the existence of an archive for the signed treaties and its destruction in the recent past.[1117] The constant emphasis by the imperial officials in the diplomatic conversations with Liudprand of Cremona that the Lombard duchies were previously "subjects"[1118] of the Byzantine emperor indicates, in my opinion, that this knowledge of the Byzantine policies from the past is, probably, more a result of information acquired from some archive, rather than transmitted orally by any of the earlier members of the imperial government. The upgrade and additions to the clauses of the Byzantine-Russian treaty of 907 just four years later is another example that certain archive for this type of documents existed in this period in order to help the process of renegotiation.[1119] In the following chapters, a general overview will be conducted of the provisions that are most often mentioned in the Byzantine treaties witnessed in the sources.

1. Political clauses

Within the frame of the political clause, the mutual relations of the two parties in the treaty were generally determined, the interpretation of which was more specifically explained in the section of military and legal provisions. What was the final political result of

[1115] Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 58-59. Examples of this Byzantine policy are the treaty of 562 with the Sasanians as reported by *Menander*, 6.314-393, and the treaties with the Rus concluded during the 10th century, which will be discussed below in the text.

[1116] Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 59-71. About the Late Antique period see Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 110-116.

[1117] Lee, *Information and Frontiers*, 36.

[1118] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 248, 259.

[1119] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 65-68.

the treaties concluded by the Byzantines can be determined from the preserved diplomatic correspondence in *The Book of Ceremonies*. In it, the states of the Islamic world, namely the Abbasid and Fatimid Caliphates, are at the highest position to which a chrysobull with four-solidi worth seal was sent,[1120] indicating the fact that they were perceived as equal political entities by the Byzantine government in international relations, meaning that together with the Byzantine Empire they had equality in the civilized world.[1121] The political ideology went so far that the Islamic caliph, like the Sasanian shah previously, was named as brother to the Byzantine emperor, and their reign as brotherhood. This policy is also confirmed by the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos, who in his letter to the caliph makes a statement that "... there are two lordships, that of the Saracens and that of the Romans, which stand above all lordship on Earth, and shine out like the two mighty beacons in the firmament. They ought, for this very reason alone, to be in contact and in brotherhood".[1122] In contrast, to the king of Francia, although viewed as an equal (spiritual brother) of the Byzantine emperor, a chrysobull with one-solidus seal worth was sent.[1123] For the states in Western Europe which emerged from the process of dissolution of Charlemagne's empire and with which the Byzantines had no direct negotiations of any kind, but only occasionally maintained diplomatic contacts, such as Bavaria, Saxony and Gaul (France), there is no statement that they received a letter with gold seal, but were named as "spiritual brothers" of the emperor.[1124] The states and tribes north of the Danube followed immediately after, who had direct contact with the Byzantine Empire and led official negotiations that ended with the conclusion of a comprehensive treaty which was signed as between two independent political entities. There were two reasons for this Byzantine policy: as a result of the fact that they were outside the *Orbis Romanus* in the Scythian wilderness and were militarily equal, and even more powerful than the Byzantine army. That is why in the diplomatic correspondence these polities received a letter (γράμματα) from the emperor with a seal worth two-solidi.[1125] Immediately after them were the rest of the states surrounding the Byzantine Empire, its neighbours, which established close diplomatic contacts with Constantinople and which, through comprehensive treaties, determined the political relationship of their ruler with the emperor. This group included numerous small states from the Transcaucasia, the Balkans, and Southern Italy, which received from the emperor a letter with orders (κέλευσις) and a seal worth two-solidi. As for the foreign policy towards these states, it was aimed at

1120 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 686, 689.
1121 Miller, *Studies*, 148-149.
1122 Nicholas, *Letters*, 1.16-18.
1123 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 691.
1124 Ibid, 689.
1125 Ibid, 690-691.

establishing a closer relationship of a kinship type with a greater level of political disparity, which ranged from a *limitrophe* client states with a high level of independence, for instance the Slavic principalities in the Balkans,[1126] to full-fledged vassals, like some of the Armenian principalities on the eastern border which not only paid a tribute, but a Byzantine official also had access to their internal affairs.[1127] The reason for one such position of the states in the Balkans, the Transcaucasia and Southern Italy in the Byzantine diplomacy should not only be sought in the size and power of the political subjects from these three regions, but also in the presence of imperial territories on their borders and the necessity to provide better security from foreign invasions, whether the raids were conducted by Arabs, Franks, Bulgarians or Slavs.

2. Military clauses

Articles of the treaty that were dealing with military affairs basically determined the obligations that each side had in regards to the other. One of the more important articles, if not the most important, was the role that one of the signatories of the treaty had in case the other was at war or in need of military assistance. Two types of assistances can be distinguished: strategic, when an ally acts independently of the Byzantine expeditionary forces, and tactical, when it is in cooperation with the imperial army. In this context, several ways of military aid which the Byzantine Empire received from its allies as a result of a treaty can be distinguished. The first type of assistance was through an alliance where the ally acted completely independently from the movement of the Byzantine army on campaign. The second is where the allied troops acted in coordination with the Byzantine army. The third type is by help received through mercenaries sent by an ally who were included in the military units of the Byzantine army, while the last type of military help is by mercenaries who were included in the imperial guard. Another article observed in the military clause of the Byzantine treaties is related to a long-term strategic consideration, for instance control of the extremely important, from a security point of view, Caspian-Caucasian gates during the 6th century, or the Pontic steppe in the 9th and 10th centuries. In relation to the region north of the Black Sea, the Byzantine policy actually relied on relations with the Pechenegs and the Rus. Another article that was in some cases inserted in the military clause of the treaty referred to demarcation and "pacification" of the frontier zone between the two parties.[1128]

1126 Gjalevski, "An Outline", 33.
1127 *DAI*, 44.45-46, 44.58-59, 44.63-64, 44.123-124. Regarding the different characteristics between the vassal states see Miller, *Studies*, 157-158, 169.
1128 Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 62-66.

What can be ascertained from the sources is that military assistance of a strategic type was most likely requested from Petar and Časlav, the *archons* of Serbia, the unnamed Serbian envoys in 992, as well as from the Magyars in 894, the Pechenegs in 917, and from Svyatoslav, the prince of Rus, in 968, while, on the other hand, tactical assistance was provided to the Byzantine Empire from all Slavic states (Croatia and the Serbian principalities) from the Balkans for the military campaign against the Arabs in Southern Italy in 870 and 880, where their troops acted as part of the Byzantine army, but also from the states in Transcaucasia, Iberia and the Armenian principalities, for other military conflicts,[1129] as well as from Vladimir of Rus who in 988 sent a military unit of 6,000 soldiers to Basileios II as a result of a concluded treaty, known as a "varangian" guard, which was included in the ranks of the Byzantine army during the civil war, and afterwards in the conflict with Samuil Kometopoulos. In terms of military assistance for realization of strategic security, *The Russian Primary Chronicle* reports that Prince Igor of Rus was supposed to provide such a service, stated in the tenth article of the treaty concluded in 945, which indicates that the Rus were supposed to close the area of Cherson from the military threat of the Black Bulgarians[1130] i.e., to guarantee the security of the Byzantine dominions in the region of Crimea.

3. Commercial clauses

This clause determined the rules in the mutual trading relations of the signatories of the agreement. It determined the trade routes, the extent of trade and the rules that merchants had to follow when trading in another country. These trade provisions were part of the agreement with the Sasanian Empire signed in 562, specifically articles three and five which regulated trade routes and determined the border crossings where the Byzantine, Persian and Saracen merchants were obligated to go through, as well as the necessary travel documentation.[1131] Identical articles can be observed in the treaties with Bulgaria concluded in the 8th and 9th centuries, and due to the unilateral change of the established articles by the Byzantines in 894 in regards to the economic relations between the two countries, a military conflict soon began. The treaties with the Rus best show the essence of the economic relations that the Byzantine Empire established with other states and peoples. The inserted clauses meet remarkably well with the pre-

[1129] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 257, reports that Nikephoros II Phokas went on a campaign in Cilicia in 965 at the head of a large army which included detachments from the Iberian and Armenian allies.
[1130] The author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 76, notes that "...regarding the Black Bulgarians, who come and ravage the Kherson district, we enjoin the Prince of Rus' not to allow them to injure that region".
[1131] *Menander*, 6.323-326, 6.332-340.

scriptions found in the *Book of Eparch*, and are even more valuable for the comparatively small amount of detail found in any other source. Bestowing of monetary allowance and separate places for foreign merchants to dwell in and around Constantinople, such as the church of St. Mamas whose premises were assigned to Rus merchants to be settled in while they were in the Byzantine capital on trade or other errands, was a well-known Byzantine practice.[1132]

4. Legal clauses

This clause establishes the position of one state vis-à-vis another through the application of laws in such a manner that it may be inferred, or asserted, that the law of one state applies to a person from another country under certain conditions, for instance when merchants cross into a foreign country to trade, or when some delict occurs at the border. These provisions may reflect the dominance of one state and the subjugation of another, or unambiguously indicate their theoretical political equality. They may also clearly reflect the dominance that one type of law has over another, for example the codified law over the common law. In the Great Treaty of 562, concluded between the Byzantine Empire and the Sasanian Empire the provision established in the seventh article says that neither law, Roman or Sasanian, was dominant in resolving disputes.[1133] In the treaties that the Byzantine government had signed with the Rus, an identical picture can be observed i.e., an equality of the Byzantine and Russ laws. This also applies to the treaty concluded in 944, where in most articles the equality of both laws is unequivocally noted, although there are also articles where the codified, in this case the Byzantine one, clearly dominates over the common law i.e., conversely, the common over the codified law.[1134]

5. Ratification of treaties and assurances

After the official negotiations have ended and the clauses in the treaty were finally determined and agreed, it was followed by its ratification, signing and providing of guarantees for its implementation. The first step towards protection of the concluded treaty was its drafting in written form in both languages (when possible), while the second was its ratification by the rulers of the two states, and the last step was the act of signing and determining the guarantees. These few steps are best seen in the treaty con-

1132 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 74-75. For a detailed analysis see Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 66-69.
1133 *Menander*, 6.343-353.
1134 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 76.

cluded between the Byzantine Empire and the Sasanian Empire.[1135] Sources also report, albeit superficially, on other treaties that followed this signature procedure. For some it is reported that the treaty was signed and exchanged between the rulers, for others this is omitted in the sources, although we can conclude with certainty that all these steps were probably followed. Unfortunately, the available sources do not reveal any information about the official document itself, the physical and epistolary details, salutations and honorific forms which could tell, for example, which ruler was named first or the manner and technique of expression, i.e., the phraseology that was used in relation to the other contracting party. The closest that can be seen in the sources to what an official agreement looked like is provided by the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* when he reports on several treaties concluded by the Byzantine Empire with the Rus during the 10th century. According to these treaties, first, the negotiating parties and their representatives were named. This was followed by a statement of intent that names the oaths with which each party intended to swear. Next was the corpus of clauses in the treaty, followed by the declaration of ratification and disposition. The final ratification of the treaty was confirmed by both delegations with joint oaths, with signature and seal, or with both procedures. Oaths differed from country to country, depending on the cultural background and the religious affiliation. In addition to the oath, the Christian nations also used a signature and a seal, the Pechenegs had their "zakana", while the Bulgars, before accepting Christianity, used weapons and various pagan rituals, for instance, sacrificing a dog. The Rus swore on their pagan gods and weapons, while the Islamic States swore on their symbols.[1136] As for the guarantees, they were known to vary from treaty to treaty, depending on which state or tribe was the other party in the negotiations. Thus, hostages and an official representative who stayed in Constantinople for the entire duration of the agreement were taken from the Pechenegs as a guarantee.[1137]

6. An Overview of the treaties and agreements with the Balkan and Pontic steppe polities

From the middle of the 9th until the beginning of the 11th century, the Byzantine Empire had conducted numerous diplomatic missions and negotiations with the states and peoples of the Balkans and the Pontic steppe, and had concluded a multitude of truces and peace treaties. Most of these are only mentioned by the chroniclers, for some of the treaties nothing more is reported except some scant information in the sources about

[1135] *Menander*, 6.304-313, 6.391-397, 6.408-423.
[1136] Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 74-76.
[1137] *DAI*, 1.20-24, 8.16-18

who was the negotiator and that a treaty was concluded, for all others, the fact that these were concluded is known through the conditions which were agreed between the two parties, and are declared by a Byzantine official or some other person who was not involved in the process, such as the treaties with Simeon, while the peace treaties concluded with the Rus during the 10th century are described in most detail and are written in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*.

In 852 the *protospatharios* Theoktistos Bryennios was sent to Bulgaria to conclude a treaty with the new Bulgar ruler Boris. Although the sources are silent about the actual course of these negotiations (which, it seems, were conducted in the Bulgarian capital of Pliska), they still report on their success i.e., on the signed truce and obligations which resulted from the treaty. What can be concluded from the information is the existence of a political and military clause in the treaty because in exchange for the cessation of hostilities and continuation of the 30-year peace, the Byzantine Empire agreed to cede to Bulgaria a territory in Thrace, including the ruined cities of Develtos and Anchialos on the Black Sea coast.[1138] The Byzantines, it seems, also gave up those parts that the Bulgars managed to conquer in the Balkan Peninsula starting from 830s, and which were previously under the authority of the Byzantine emperor, or in his sphere of influence, like medieval Macedonia and the region of Deabolis.[1139] Although from a territorial point of view this treaty was unfavourable for the Byzantine Balkan policy of reintegration, from a military standpoint it achieved the desired end. It not only allowed for the Byzantine government to pacify the Bulgar aggressive policy, but also to transfer part of the thematic units stationed in the Balkans to Asia Minor as a reinforcement to the armies which fought against the Arabs on the eastern border.

A decade later, the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria signed a new peace treaty which changed their political relations forever. Immediately after its ratification and signing, during 864 or 865, the Bulgars officially accepted Christianity from Constantinople, and Boris took the name of his baptismal godfather - Emperor Michael III, which points to the fact that this treaty was comprehensive i.e., it regulated all relations between the two states, not only the political e.g., the mutual border, but also the religious and military. It seems that the bribery that Niketas the Paphlagonian speaks about in the *Life of St*.

[1138] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 162.13.; *Genesios*, IV.7. For the results of this Byzantine-Bulgarian treaty see Zlatarski, *Istorii*a, 2-4.; Treadgold, *History*, 449-450. According to Hupchick, *The Bulgarian-Byzantine wars*, 131, the reason why the Bulgarians concluded this treaty was because of Boris' need to have a peaceful neighbour on his southern border while he focused his political interests in Pannonia.

[1139] During the 850s (Gjalevski, "Sprečuvajki ja bugarskata ekspanzija", 54, n.40) Mount Belasitza became a border zone between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria. In 864, the Bulgarian ruler Boris already had under his authority the sklavinia Berzitia, as well as other parts of medieval Macedonia and the region of Deabolis.

Ignatios,[1140] presented in other written sources as imperial gifts, and part of which have been confirmed by archaeological findings, were actually Byzantine territorial concessions in Thrace near the uninhabited area of Zagora (Sidera) up to the city of Develtos on the Black Sea coast, a confirmation and acknowledgement of the Byzantine-Bulgarian border and aid in food to stop the starvation of the future brothers in faith.[1141] The truce and peace treaty agreed in this manner, it seems, was concluded immediately after the cessation of military operations, and confirmed afterwards in the Byzantine capital, since the sources only superficially report about the arrival of a Bulgarian delegation in this period. Apparently, they were sent by Boris to give an oath in front the Byzantine government according to the established diplomatic protocols for respecting the concluded peace treaty.[1142] Although, all the political and territorial concessions which were granted to the Bulgarian ruler in exchange for the acceptance of Christianity from the patriarchate of Constantinople, camouflaged in accordance with the Byzantine political ideology as gifts bestowed to the spiritual son of the emperor,[1143] were *de facto* formal and legal recognition of the Bulgarian state, nevertheless, for the Byzantine government it was a great diplomatic victory.

However, the process of baptism of the Bulgarian subjects did not go as easily as the Byzantine government had imagined. Despite Boris' serious political manoeuvring between Constantinople and Rome, in the end the Bulgarian *knyaz* turned to the Byzantine capital. Throughout all this time, the Byzantines sent many diplomatic missions to Bulgaria, during which negotiations of ecclesiastical nature were actively taking place and included the issue of the true Christian dogma and teaching. As a result of the actual aspect of the problem, the Byzantine embassies were most likely led by high church officials, or they were included in their ranks.[1144] The conclusions that were reached at the

[1140] *The life of Patriarch Ignatius*, 39.18-20.

[1141] According to the notice of *Symeon Magister*, 665.11-666.7, this territory was bestowed to Boris by the Byzantine emperor Michael III. The pillar from Balshi is evidence of the baptism of Boris, but also of the border of the Bulgarian state. About the pillar see Ivanov, *Bălgarski starini*, 12-16. On the territorial concessions in Thrace see *Theophanes Continuatus*, 165.4-6, and Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 92, n.41. For demarcation of the Byzantine-Bulgarian border see Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 24-27.

[1142] A typical example of the manner in which the treaties between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria were concluded until this period is the treaty signed by Leo V and the Bulgar ruler Omurtag, which is pointed out by Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 75. See also Alexandrov, "The Bulgarian-Byzantine treaty of 927", 39. This Bulgarian delegation should probably be related with the anecdote of *Theophanes Continuatus*, 229.7, which he presents in the life of the future emperor Basileios the Macedonian.

[1143] Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor", 10, indicates that all decrees or treaties towards other countries and leaders, no matter how unfavourable these were for the Byzantine emperor, were handed with a chrysobull and presented to the public as a mercy given to other rulers and peoples. See also Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 35, 37.

[1144] It is not unknown for priests to be at the head of a Byzantine diplomatic mission. During this period

church council which was held in Constantinople during 869-870 is sufficient evidence which allows us to assume that the purpose of the envoys sent between the two states, but also the negotiations that took place during these meetings, were not only about the essence of the Christian dogma. All the various sophistic arguments mentioned by Anastasius Bibliotecarius actually represented a kind of diplomatic technique, a screen through which the crucial negotiations were conducted, a return of the Bulgars back to the Byzantine sphere of influence and determining the position which the future Bulgarian church would have in Christendom. If an analysis is made of the last days of the council, it can be noted that the arrival of the Bulgarian envoys, the convening of an additional assembly with a single item on the agenda - the resolution of the Bulgarian church issue, and even the course of the debate itself where both sides (Byzantines and the representatives from the eastern churches on the one hand and the Roman legates on the other) when they were referring to the historical facts about the past of the Thracian territory claimed the right of jurisdiction over the Bulgarian church,[1145] it probably represented a pre-arranged joint diplomatic move by the Byzantine Emperor and *knyaz* Boris through which not only the Byzantine Empire but also Bulgaria would eventually achieve what it wanted.

Having learned from its negative experience, the Byzantine government, in the time of these intensified diplomatic contacts with the Bulgarians, agreed to certain concessions regarding the church question, accepting Boris' request for his own church, but at the same time not jeopardizing their commitment to subjugate Bulgaria under the rule of the Byzantine emperor. The solution that was reached can be seen through the status of the future Bulgarian church itself. It was in the rank of an archbishopric which canonically fell under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It seems that, after the previously reached agreement between the two sovereigns, the Bulgarian head of the church was elected by an ecumenical council in front of representatives from all five patriarchates, but with the prior consent of the emperor and inaugurated by the patriarch Ignatios. The basis of the consent and the probable religious clause in the treaty, it seems, was the mutual agreement that the appointment of the first head of the new Bulgarian church should be carried out only with a prior approval from "God's representative on earth", the emperor in Constantinople, which from an ideological point of view, in fact,

Photios was sent as an envoy before he was installed as a patriarch, as well as Constantine-Cyril before he was sent to Moravia, who as an envoy was on a mission to the Arabs and the Khazars.

[1145] According to the opinion of Anastasius Bibliotecarius (*FLHB* Tomus II, 188-193), since "...the land of the Bulgarians...was previously under Greek rule and there was a Greek clergy...", their church should have been under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. See also Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, 267.; Angelov, *Bălgarskata Srednovekovna diplomaciia*, 106-107.

represented a recognition of his hegemony.[1146] Internally, the Bulgarian church possessed exceptionally wide autonomy and a higher rank than the other Byzantine bishoprics,[1147] identical to that held by the archbishop of Cyprus. Although during the following years Rome tried to restore the ecclesiastical supremacy in Bulgaria, these attempts represented some kind of a diplomatic manoeuvre than a more serious attempt to annul the political agreement reached in 870.[1148]

After the disagreements that arose from the transfer of trade from Constantinople to the city of Thessalonica, Bulgaria declared war on the Byzantine Empire. As a result of the heavy military defeats which the Byzantines suffered from the Bulgarians at Boulgarophygon and Acheloos they requested a truce from *knyaz* Simeon. From the statement of the main negotiator Leon Choerosphactès that he managed to "...receive [from Bulgaria] 120,000 prisoners and conclude a written peace agreement...",[1149] it can be concluded that during 896 a Byzantine-Bulgarian peace treaty was reached with which the hostilities between these two states ceased. The sources point to the fact that this treaty had several provisions, of which the political, military, as well as a "prisoners" clause can be reliably confirmed. So, in exchange for peace and the release of a large number of Byzantine prisoners, Leon VI agreed to bestow rich gifts to the Bulgarian *knyaz* every year in the border town of Develtos.[1150] The Byzantine emperor also seems to have agreed on a certain territorial concession in Thrace, because the sources report that the city of Medea was now bordering the Bulgarian state,[1151] and later the border was also altered in the area near the city of Dyrrachion.[1152] Although the terms of this treaty were to the detriment of the Byzantine Empire, after several disastrous defeats in the battlefield from Bulgarian arms, the final result of the negotiations was not so unfavourable for the Byzantines, although the reputation of the emperor was seriously damaged.

In 913, after the renewal of the military conflict with Bulgaria, the Byzantine regency led by the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos began new peace negotiations with Simeon at Hebdomon in the vicinity of Constantinople. The next few sentences from the sources

[1146] Shepard, "Slavs and Bulgars", 244.; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 152.

[1147] Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 144-149.; Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 37.; Shepard, "Slavs and Bulgars", 243-244.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 173.

[1148] On the correspondence of the Roman popes with the Byzantine Empire, Bulgaria and neighbouring states in *FLHB* Tomus II, 136-181. See also Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, 297-331.; Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 153-201.; Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 187-191.

[1149] *Léon Choerosphactès*, 18.6-7.

[1150] Nicholas, *Letters*, 6.30-34.

[1151] For this see in the Life of St. Euthymius in *FGHB* Tomus IV, 319. For the details of the peace treaty, see Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 312-322.; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 60.; Shepard, "Bulgaria: the other Balkan empire", 571, assumes that the Byzantines did not make any major concessions to the Bulgarians when signing this treaty.

[1152] *Léon Choerosphactès*, 18.8-9.

give a clear picture of the actual course of the negotiations. Skylitzes reports that after the arrival of *magistros* Theodore, "...there were lengthy discussions..."[1153] with the regency which, according to the information presented in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes Continuatus, included the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos, Stephanos and the *magistros* Ioannes.[1154] In order for the negotiations to be successful and at the same time the lives of negotiators safe, according to the medieval diplomatic principles, the negotiating parties had to provide suitable hostages. Since the negotiations were conducted in the vicinity of the palace complex of Hebdomon where the Bulgarian ruler was stationed with his army, his safety could not be questioned. That is why the sources state that only Simeon gave hostages through which not only the security of the Byzantine negotiators would be ensured, but also the success of these negotiations. For this purpose, he sent his sons to the palace where the young emperor Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos was staying.[1155] What exactly was agreed upon during these negotiations is unknown as a result of the deliberate editing and reworking of this event.[1156] What can be revealed from the sources is that there was certainty a political clause in the treaty which determined the relations between the two states. By conferring the title of *basileus* to Simeon, the political position of Bulgaria in relation to the Byzantine Empire was now raised to a higher level. After the treaty was concluded, an oath was given, as indicated by Nikolaos Mystikos in his letter to Simeon.[1157]

Immediately after Petar's accession to the Bulgarian throne and a brief military conflict, negotiations with Romanos I Lekapenos began. Although the terms under which the treaty was concluded between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria are not attested by the Byzantine authors, these can be ascertained through other source material. If we consider the Byzantine practice of establishing 30-year treaties, it can be assumed that this one from 927 was also concluded for such a long period. One of the clauses of the agreement, apparently, was political and had several subsections. Another one concerned the demarcation of the Byzantine-Bulgarian border. If one analyses the list of Bulgarian bishoprics during the time of Petar, it is noted that they covered borders which are almost identical to those from the treaties in 896 and 904 concluded during the reign of Leon VI.[1158] The second point was the tribute which was agreed to be paid to Petar on an annual basis, probably disguised as an allowance for Maria Lekapena's support, because

[1153] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 194.
[1154] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 385.15-16.
[1155] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 194.
[1156] Shepard, "Symeon of Bulgaria", 20-26.
[1157] Nicholas, *Letters*, 8.89-92, 8.111-112.
[1158] According to *DAI*, 9.101-102, the Ditzina River near the city of Mesembria was the border of the Bulgarian state. See also Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 98.; Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 525.

Leo the Deacon notes that in 966 the Bulgarian envoys asked Nikephoros II Phokas to pay them the usual sum.[1159] Also, *De Administrando Imperio* reports that immediately after the conclusion of the peace, it was agreed to carry out an exchange of prisoners.[1160] If we can believe Zonaras' and Skylitzes' narrative about the request of Nikephoros II Phokas to the Bulgarian ruler Petar to stop the Magyar incursions, probably, this agreement also had a military clause aimed at maintaining the security of the imperial border in the Balkans.[1161] However, one of the most important sections in this treaty is the recognition of the title of *basileus*. The fact that Petar bore that title throughout his reign can be noted in the diplomatic protocol attested in *The Book of Ceremonies*, used at the reception of foreign delegations in the Grand Palace, where he is named as *basileus of the Bulgarians*.[1162] This is also reported by Theophanes Continuatus, who says that Maria rejoiced "...that she was united with an imperial man and [was] proclaimed Bulgarian co-ruler".[1163] Since Petar now had the title of *basileus* and was married to a Byzantine princess, the Bulgarian envoys gained an additional privilege when there was imperial reception in the Grand Palace, precedence over other foreign envoys.[1164] The recognition of the Bulgarian patriarchate also had its advantage. This dissuaded the Bulgarians from their attempts to connect with the Roman papacy.[1165] Immediately after the ratification of the agreement, the Byzantine practice to have the treaty in two copies followed, one in Bulgarian and the other in romaika, medieval Hellenic, as well as a guarantee in form of an oath by Petar, as his predecessors on the throne, Simeon and Boris, did, a protocol which was carried out in Blachernae.[1166] At first sight, this treaty appears like a major political defeat for the Byzantines. However, if observed in more detail, as a state that had previously been militarily humiliated by its Balkan enemy, the signed treaty was actually a significant diplomatic victory for the Byzantine Empire over the new Bulgarian ruler. The Byzantine government did not lose any significant territory in the Balkans, and the amount of the established tribute, it seems, did not differ much from that which Leon VI had agreed to bestow to Simeon in 896.

The Byzantine diplomatic missions towards Croatia and the Serb principalities in the Adriatic region of the Balkans from the middle of the 9th until the end of the 10th

1159 *Leo the Deacon*, 109. Also, Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 99.
1160 *DAI*, 13.159. See Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 526.
1161 Zonarae, *Epitome Historiarum*, 87.9-15. Cf. Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 265.
1162 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 690.
1163 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 415.7-8.
1164 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 250. See also Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 528-529.; Alexandrov, "The Bulgarian-Byzantine treaty of 927", 52.; Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 99.
1165 Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*, 100.
1166 Alexandrov, "The Bulgarian-Byzantine treaty of 927", 39.

century can be divided into two categories: relational and extra-diplomatic.[1167] Although there is no evidence of any formal diplomacy used by the Byzantines, it probably existed.[1168] As relational diplomacy, the missions sent during the reign of Emperor Basileios I can be pointed out, and as extra-diplomatic those of Leon Rhabduchus, although there is a high probability that this mission was at the same time relational i.e., sent in order to remind the ruler of Serbia about his duties. What can be observed from the sources is that these relational missions were probably in the rank of full-size embassies consisting of several persons (the first embassy sent after the campaign of Niketas Ooryphas consisted of imperial officials and clergymen), while the extra-diplomatic (the mission of the *strategos* of Dyrrachium), were led by just one man, plus his retinue. Relational and extra-diplomatic types of diplomatic activity were often overlapping,[1169] an aspect which can be clearly noticed in the case of the Serbian principalities. After the official negotiations had finished, the Byzantine government regulated the established relations by concluding a treaty, because even the negotiations with the Pechenegs ended with ratification, signing of a treaty and giving of guarantees.

Regarding the reason for conducting relational diplomacy during the reign of Basileios I, it is necessary, in my opinion, to observe the political situation in the Balkans and the Adriatic Sea i.e., the Bulgarian policy of expansion and the Arab naval incursions. This situation on the ground made both sides, the Byzantine Empire and the Slavic principalities of this region, aware of the fact that if they wanted to realize their interests, they had to determine the conditions under which the further mutual relations would be based. In that context, sending of imperial officials as envoys to the Serbian principalities,[1170] where the priests were noted only as members of their entourage, indicates that the mission was not done only for what the sources state, spreading of Christianity and baptizing of unbelievers, but rather that this diplomatic mission had a multilayered background, in which the secular politics had priority. In fact, this points to the assumption that more substantial talks and negotiations were conducted between the Byzantine Empire and the Serbian principalities, which eventually ended with conclusion of a treaty aimed at regulating their mutual relations. Although such a treaty is not writ-

[1167] Although Miller, *Studies*, 64-65, suggests that the Byzantines sent extra-diplomatic missions "...concerning either declaration, conduct, or continuation of war, or all the various measures taken to secure a cessation of arms once war has begun...", in my opinion, this term can be applied, at least, to all other non-relational diplomatic activities that are part of the military sphere.

[1168] There is evidence of formal diplomacy (diplomatic activity carried out on a yearly basis) in *DAI*, 32.115-116, but it applies to Serbian *archons* in the period between the two reigns of Zacharias.

[1169] Miller, *Studies*, 65.

[1170] That in the reign of Basileios I i.e., in 870, an embassy was sent to Mutimir of Serbia/Rashka indicates Živković, *Portreti vladara*, 40.

ten in the sources, the events which happened afterwards and the military participation of the Slavs from these principalities in the siege of Bari point to its existence.[1171] As a result of the identical position that these Slavic principalities had in the "hierarchy of states"[1172] with those on the eastern border of the Byzantine Empire, this treaty was most likely very similar to the one concluded with the *kouropalates* of Iberia, which is written in a chapter of *De Administrando Imperio*.[1173]

Concerning the probable content of the peace treaties, or other agreements signed by the Slavic rulers in the Adriatic region of the Balkans, it can be assumed that, at least for those concluded during the reign of emperor Basileios I, probably had a political and military clause. It is not known for sure which ritual was applied by the Slavs to confirm the ratification and signing of the treaty, whether Christian customs were applied or some other, which is a normal conclusion of negotiations, because the sources are silent on this issue.

What exactly was agreed upon regarding the political issue is not known, except that after the negotiations had ended, the terminology used in sources points to the fact that the Serbian principalities recognized the Byzantine political hegemony and became its client states, but not full-fledged vassals. What can be concluded regarding their position as client states is that they were allies who established close relations with the emperor as a result of a political and military obligation written in a treaty, but at the same time, they retained their independence, similar, in my opinion, to the *limitrophe* allies which existed on the Byzantine borders until the end of the 7th century.[1174] The reason for this assumption is that, according to the sources, the Serbian principalities had complete freedom to appoint their own rulers, while the Byzantine emperor only approved and recognized them as *archons*, and thus the self-government of the state. In fact, this protocolary confirmation showed not only the essence of the political subjugation of the Slavic principalities, but also the principle on which the supreme authority of the Byzantine Empire in this part of the Balkans was based. According to the Byzantine political ideology, with this acclamation from the emperor, the local rulers became in a way his political colleagues, but of a lower rank, through whom the imperial policy was to be implemented in their states. Additionally, it was expected from them to give service (δουλεία) i.e., military assistance, when needed and to provide security for the imperial

1171 *DAI*, 45.104-118. See also Ferluga, "Vizantisko carstvo", 92.
1172 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 687, 691.
1173 *DAI*, 45.104-118.
1174 Gjalevski, "An Outline", 33. See also Otto F. Winter, "Klientelkonige im romishen und byzantinishen Reich", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft 2* (1952): 42-50.; Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy", 11-13, 18.

territories on their borders, for which they received subsidies (at least during the time of Basileios I) from the Byzantine Empire. It was never arranged to give tribute, or an imperial bureaucrat to have access in their internal affairs, not like some Armenian principalities on the Byzantine eastern border.[1175] In the official diplomatic correspondence these Slavic principalities had received commands (κέλευσις) from the emperor (as a result of the military obligation at least) which indicates the existence of a much closer ties, both political and military, between the two parties. Furthermore, the sources suggest that there was no Byzantine intervention in the internal affairs of the Slavic principalities, only when a treaty was breached, or some foreign hostile power, like Bulgaria, interfered. Also, the sending of envoys to Constantinople (like the Serbs have done) on a yearly basis between the end of the 9th and beginning of the 10th century indicates that the Slavic potentates from this Balkan region accepted the official correspondence of the imperial government and the term κέλευσις, and thus their political subordination in relation to the Byzantine emperor. The assumption that these principalities only recognized some ideological i.e., abstract, hegemony of the Byzantine Empire and not an actual practicable supremacy shaped through military and non-military means, as well as propaganda, is incorrect.[1176] Actually, the whole political situation changed in favour of the Byzantine government when it made a "show of force" with its navy in the Adriatic. The negotiations that followed were conducted in an atmosphere in which the Slavic potentates were fully aware of the actual Byzantine military and political i.e., diplomatic might, and the consequences that could follow if used. Moreover, the Slavic principalities on the Adriatic coast, same as the principalities in Transcaucasia or the duchies in Southern Italy, were within the reach of the Byzantine army for another "show of force", if it was required of course, and, in my opinion, they were fully aware of that possibility.

In contrast to the political part of the treaty, it is possible to assume much more precisely the military affairs which were agreed between the Byzantine Empire and the Slavic principalities. The sources suggest that the Byzantines managed to secure military service i.e., an alliance, from the Slavs, both from Croatia and the Serbian principalities. The military assistance that was requested could be a strategic one i.e., when the ally acts independently of the Byzantine expeditionary forces, and tactical i.e., in co-

[1175] *DAI*, 44.45-46, 58-59, 63-64, 123-124.

[1176] I don't agree with Ferluga, "Vizantisko carstvo", 88-91, that the Slavic principalities recognized some vague ideological hegemony. Actually, once ideology is implemented on the field, in this case in international relations, and accepted by others, then it becomes the policy that is actually being practiced. Furthermore, if the Byzantine government had in written in its treaties the political relation with the other party, that, in fact, shifts it from the field of ideology and abstractness to that of Medieval political legality. It is an entirely different matter whether one would respect the signed treaties and for how long. Breach of agreement was very common in the medieval period.

operation with the Byzantine army. What can be concluded from the sources is that a military assistance of a strategic type was probably requested from all the Slavs in order to maintain the security of the imperial territories in the Adriatic Sea and Dalmatia, as well as a decade later in 896 from Petar, the *archon* of Serbia, in the fight against Simeon, while tactical assistance was given to the Byzantine Empire by all Slavic principalities for the military campaign against the Arabs in Southern Italy in 870, and again in 880, when their troops acted as a unit in the Byzantine army. The term κέλευσις[1177] noted in *De Administrando Imperi*o actually explains the reason behind their participation in the military campaign of 870. It was an official term which denoted an imperial order used by the Byzantine government only to those who owed some service to the emperor based on a previously concluded treaty.

The military clause of the treaty with the Serbian principalities is complemented by the thirtieth chapter of *De Administrando Imperio*, which reports that in the middle of the 9th century the Dalmatian cities were strongly pressed by the Slavs who lived in the interior of the Balkans. To improve their security Emperor Basileios I ordered "...that all that was then paid to the military commander they should pay to the Slavs, and live at peace with them...And from that time all these cities became tributary to the Slavs".[1178] According to Porphyrogennetos, the cities west of Ragusa paid gold to the Slavs from the interior in the amount of 710 *nomismata* (almost as much as the salary of a Byzantine *strategos* from the western *themata*),[1179] not including the other products that were bestowed to them. Although *De Administrando Imperio* does not explicitly testify who were the Slavs to whom these funds were paid, its author nevertheless reports that the population of these Dalmatian cities was prevented by the Croats from cultivating the land in the interior of the mainland,[1180] which points to the fact that Croatia posed a serious danger to their security. The military victory of the Croatian prince Trpimir which was achieved between 846 and 848 over the Byzantine *patrikios*, probably the first man of these Dalmatian cities,[1181] is sufficient evidence that sheds some light on the nature of Byzantine-Croat relations from the middle of the 9th century. Therefore, as a result of the fact that until the end of the 870s Croatia did not seem to recognize the supreme authority of the Byzantine Empire, but instead that of the Frankish emperor, it can be concluded that, probably, this monetary payment, which was concluded through a treaty (πάκτον),[1182]

1177 *DAI*, 29.111.
1178 Ibid, 30.127-138.
1179 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 697.
1180 *DAI*, 30.123-125.
1181 Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 139.; Živković, *Južni Sloveni*, 239-240.
1182 *DAI*, 30.133.

had a multiple purpose: to improve the deteriorated political relations between these two states, but also to prevent new Croatian attacks on the Byzantine dominions in Dalmatia.[1183]

In contrast to the gold bestowed by the western Dalmatian cities to the ruler of Croatia, Porphyrogennetos reports that the city of Ragusa paid only 72 nomismata to the rulers of Zachlumia and Terbounia, or 36 *nomismata* each.[1184] However, what is noticeable about this payment is that the amount of the sum is almost ten times less than the one intended for the Croats, but it is in the amount of one year's salary for *komes*, a military commander of a *bandon*, the smallest unit in the Byzantine army during this period. Hence, if the testimonies of the source material are accepted according to which the rulers of these principalities recognized the hegemony of the Byzantine Empire, then it cannot be perceived as a tribute paid to a completely independent ruler. Since the *archons* of the states in the Transcaucasia, who also recognized Byzantine hegemony and had military obligations to the emperor, received similar monetary subsidies, it is not excluded that this payment actually had the same function i.e., it represented a type of a monetary compensation given by the imperial government to his ally as a merit for the service he performed or was to perform.[1185] If the political situation in the Balkans is observed, it can be assumed that this payment was most likely a consequence of the political approach of the Bulgarian *knyaz* Boris-Michael towards Rome and the existing Arab threat in the Adriatic region i.e., a type of a diplomatic measure through which the Byzantines wanted not only to ensure the existing political and military support from these Slavic principalities, but also to transfer to them the obligation for security of the imperial territories in Dalmatia.

From the end of the 9th century, the Byzantine Empire had numerous contacts with the Magyars, both friendly and hostile. The first treaty which the Byzantines signed with this people was in 896 during the conflict with Simeon. The only fact that can be concluded is that the treaty was, possibly, of a military nature, which provided the Byzantine Empire with strategic military assistance i.e., an independent operation in coordination with the Byzantine military forces. After their migration to Pannonia, the relations significantly deteriorated. As a consequence of the raiding activity of the Magyars throughout the Thracian regions in 934, the Byzantine government concluded a truce which only temporarily delayed their aggressive intentions. The new Magyar invasion of 943 showed the Byzantines that the only option that would significantly improve the security situation of the imperial territories in the Balkans and lead to a possible long-term peace

[1183] Gjalevski, "An Outline ", 34.
[1184] *DAI*, 30.140-142.
[1185] Ibid, 43.115-118.

was negotiations. However, the result of these negotiations was not a temporary agreement which was only valid for some of the Magyar tribes, but an official treaty. Evidence for this is the term σπονδὰς εἰρηνικὰς used by Byzantine chroniclers to describe this treaty. This term was used only when the treaty was official and had legal weight i.e., it was written on parchment, consisting of several clauses, ratified, signed and with an oath and guarantees given by the representatives of both parties.[1186] As a result of the instability of the mutual relations and the events that happened in previous years it can be assumed that these negotiations, unlike those in 934, were conducted with someone who could impose this legal document on all Magyars. The only one who, according to the Byzantine belief, had the political weight to achieve this was the leader of the Arpad clan. Although at the moment his position was deteriorated, still, because of his reputation among the population, as well as his function of supreme leader, he theoretically possessed a strong enough political authority through which he could then impose on the other leaders in binding his decision for a peace treaty with the Byzantine Empire, so that it would be accepted and respected equally by all Magyar clans.[1187] Regarding the treaty with the Magyars, the sources do not report what clauses it contained. However, despite the fact that the treaty was in force, the raiding incursions of the Magyars into Byzantine territory continued, once again through *karchas* Bulcsu. The aggressive and extremely hostile attitude he manifested towards the Byzantine Empire immediately after leaving Constantinople with all the bestowed honours, points to the fact that the treaties could be annulled very easily.[1188]

The sources do not provide more detailed information about the treaties that the Byzantine government concluded with the Pechenegs. What can be assumed with certainty is that these treaties contained a political clause which determined the relations and the obligations of both parties in the forthcoming military alliance, as well as a military clause which determined the type of military aid which would be sent to the Byzantine Empire, and which, according to the statement of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos in *De Administrando Imperio*, was similar as the one agreed with the Magyars in 896 against Simeon, of a strategic type.[1189] The second point that can be determined

[1186] Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 57.

[1187] Since the time of the *Taktika*, XVIII.44, the Byzantines knew of the existence of a supreme leader among the Magyars. The political favour of the Byzantines towards the Árpád's clan and the imperial recognition of his primacy in ruling over other Magyar tribes is confirmed later by the *DAI*, 40.47-49. According to the assumption of Antonopoulos, "Byzantium, The Magyar Raids", 262-264, the negotiations of 943 were conducted with the Árpád's clan.

[1188] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231, reports that Bulcsú "...violated his contract with God and often invaded Roman land with all his people".

[1189] According to *DAI*, 8.18-21, the Pechenegs "...whenever the emperor calls upon them, they are to serve him,

about the treaties with this steppe people is the guarantee which was requested by the emperor, and was provided by the Pechenegs: an oath before the envoy known to the Byzantines under the term "zakana" and hostages who were dispatched in Constantinople as "friends" for the duration of the treaty.[1190] The ease with which the Byzantine Empire won over the Pechenegs and succeeded in persuading them to change sides in the conflicts in which they were initially allied with its enemies should be sought in the character of this nomadic people, in their immeasurable greed and unfettered avarice for acquiring various precious items, a feature that is explicitly and vividly brought out by Porphyrogennetos. It can be rightly assumed that the reason for rejection of the military alliances previously agreed with the Byzantine enemies and restoration of the friendly relations with the emperor was always the same, a hefty bribe. This happened several times during the 10th century, during the Rus military campaign in 943 and in the conflict with Svyatoslav, the prince of Rus, more precisely, after his defeat near the city of Arkadioupolis. Also, the same diplomatic means of persuasion were probably used by the Byzantine envoys while Krakras, a high military commander in Samuil's State, conducted negotiations with the Pechenegs, measures that ultimately led to the rejection of his proposal by this steppe people.

Most detailed overview and information about the content of the treaties that the Byzantine Empire concluded with other polities, as well as about the procedures of signing, ratification and providing of guarantees, can be found in the treaties between the Byzantine Empire and the Rus, which are an integral part of the passages in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*.[1191] The first treaty signed in the time of Basileios I ensured a period of prolonged peace between the two states. The second, which was concluded with Prince Oleg in 907, as well as the signing of a more detailed treaty four years later, brought significant benefits to the Byzantine Empire which particularly affected the military readiness of its army forces. The third treaty of 944 brought the Rus into even closer relations with the Byzantine Empire, while the one with Svyatoslav in 971 allowed peace between the two states after a protracted military conflict in the Balkans. The last treaty concluded with Vladimir during 988 set the relations on an even higher level and allowed for a marriage with a princess that was porphyrogennita, "born in purple".

The treaty of 860 is only briefly attested in the sources. What is known is that with the help of "numerous" quantities of gold, silver and precious gifts, the Byzantine government managed to negotiate peace (σπονδὰς εἰρηνικὰς) with the Rus and to send a

whether against the Russians, or against the Bulgarians, or again against the Turks".

1190 *DAI,* 8.16-18.

1191 About the treaties in more detail see Iana Malingudi, "Russko-vizantiiskie dogovori v X v. v svete diplomatiki", *Vizantiiskii vremenik* 57 (1997): 58-87.

mission for their baptism. This actually points to the fact that the peace treaty contained at least two clauses: political and religious. The result of the political clause which determined the mutual relations can be seen in *The Book of Ceremonies* and in the surviving diplomatic correspondence. In this Byzantine source, the Rus are shown as part of the international community of states where the *basileus* sent to the *archon* of Rus a letter (γράμματα) with a two-solidi seal. Although the process of ratification, signature and providing of guarantee is not written down, it can be concluded with certainty that the Russian envoys, who were not yet baptized, took the oath according to their pagan custom.

During 907, the Byzantine Empire concluded a peace treaty with Oleg, the *archon* of the Rus, which was renewed and expanded four years later. *The Russian Primary Chronicle* presents detailed information about the process of negotiation of this treaty, as well as about the clauses and procedure of its conclusion. Apart from the political one, which determined the relations between the two countries, the peace treaty also included an economic clause which regulated the rights of the Rus merchants in Constantinople, the route of movement, the accommodations in the premises of St. Mamas, as well as the amount of allowance that the Byzantines had to provide to the Rus merchants during their visit in the Byzantine capital. Then the author presents the procedure of ratification and giving an oath, which the Rus took before their weapons and the gods Perun and Volos.[1192]

In 911 an extended contract was concluded and signed. Apart from more detailed information about the content of the political clause, *The Russian Primary Chronicle* reports of the existence of a legal clause, of expansion of the economic articles in the treaty, of a military clause, as well as of an insertion of a clause which refers to refugees, prisoners and slaves. With the political clause, the friendly relations which were established between the two countries and the future military alliance were reaffirmed. The legal clause, which is the most extensive in relation to the others, determines the punishments for certain misdemeanours and crimes, as well as for committed murder, which were carried out by Rus and Byzantine subjects. From the articles that make up this clause it can be determined that both laws, both the Rus and the Byzantine, had equal importance in legal disputes that were to be brought before the court. Regarding the economic clause, an article was added which referred to the rights and obligations of the Rus in case of a shipwreck.[1193]

While in the previous period the Rus warriors were probably only recruited on an individual level, mostly in the ranks of the Imperial Guard,[1194] the extended treaty of 911

[1192] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 64-65.
[1193] Ibid, 66-68.
[1194] Blondal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 33.; Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 60.

changed this Byzantine recruitment policy. According to the military clause, it allowed the Rus "...whenever you [Byzantines] find it necessary to declare war, or when you are conducting a campaign, providing any Russes desirous of honoring your Emperor come at any time and wish to remain in his service, they shall be permitted in this respect to act according to their desire".[1195] This article of the treaty represents an indisputable fact that it allowed the Rus to be recruited in the Byzantine army as mercenaries, but now massively in the ranks of the regular land units, in the imperial fleet, as well as in the elite units of the *tagmata*.[1196] This clause, apparently, was inserted into the treaty in order to regulate the already established practice of recruiting Rus into the Byzantine army,[1197] probably at the behest of the Byzantine government, although the possibility that it was simultaneously initiated by the Rus should not be ruled out.[1198] Evidence that during the first half of the 10th century there were a large number of Rus mercenaries in the Byzantine army is a document, probably part of a military list, which can be found in *The Book of Ceremonies*, and reports that in the beginning of 911, before this Byzantine-Rus treaty, about 700 Rus had already been recruited for the upcoming Cretan campaign.[1199]

The sources are silent on the manner in which the Rus mercenaries were integrated into the Byzantine army. It is difficult to determine whether, after being registered into the military lists, they were distributed among different units together with native recruits under the command of a Byzantine officer, or whether they were recruited as a separate unit - a *bandon* with its own officer, but under supreme command of the *strategos*.[1200] It is also not possible to determine with certainty whether the Rus mercenaries were hired for multi-year military service or only for the needs of a particular campaign. The created framework of the military clause in the treaty of 911 indicates that the recruitment of the Rus into the Byzantine army was most likely carried out according to all the methods previously outlined. However, which of these was used depended mostly on the military needs of the Byzantine government at the given moment.[1201] Therefore, it

[1195] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 68.
[1196] Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 93.; Blondal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 36.
[1197] Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 62, n.10.; Blondal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 13.
[1198] Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 88-89.
[1199] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 651.
[1200] As Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 62-63, n.20, concludes, this type of foreign military aid is the most difficult to differentiate in the sources.
[1201] This can be easily observed in the sources. That Rus mercenaries were recruited in the Byzantine army not only in large numbers, but also in different military ranks is confirmed by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 652, 654, regarding their participation in the Cretan mission of 911. For the presence of Rus ships and mercenaries in the Byzantine fleet in the military operations in Longobardia conducted during 935 see *The Book of Ceremonies*, 660. For their participation in the Cretan campaign of 949 as infantry and part of the naval fleet see *The Book of Ceremonies*, 664, 667, 673-674. For participation of Rus

can be assumed that all the different aspects of the recruitment of Rus mercenaries in the Byzantine army were formally and legally regulated through this single article.

The treaty of 911 was renewed on Byzantine initiative in 944 following the intention of Igor, the prince of Rus, in spite of a heavy defeat in 941, to attack the Byzantine Empire once more. One of the reasons for the raiding campaign of 941 is probably to be found in the possibility that the Byzantine-Rus treaty of 911 had expired due to its 30-years duration, similar to the treaties which the Byzantines concluded with the Bulgarian rulers. The treaty of 944 was much less favourable for the Rus as a result of the heavy defeat they previously suffered. The author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* reports that in this treaty there was a political, economic, legal and military clause, as well as a clause regarding refugees, slaves and criminals, and reports on the procedure of ratification, signing and providing guarantees. The political clause in this treaty only confirms the relations that already existed between the two states established by the previous treaty of 911, which were relations of friends who were in a military alliance and who cared about the mutual security, as in the case of Cherson.[1202] The legal clause, as in the previous treaty, regulated the punishments for certain offenses and crimes, as well as for committed murder, where both Rus and Byzantines were involved. From the articles which make up this clause it can be determined that in most of these there was an equality of the Byzantine codified with the Rus common law. In several cases this treaty gives dominance to the Byzantine codified over Rus law, and in others to the common over Byzantine law. As for the economic clause, apart from the restoration of the rights which the Rus merchants had with the treaty of 911, and their amendment, for example their route of movement, accommodation in the premises of the church of St. Mamas, allowance for visiting Constantinople, obligations of the Rus in case of shipwreck, as well as the quantity of luxury goods which could be purchased, the rules for entry of Rus merchant fleet into Byzantine waters were supplemented and changed.[1203]

Unlike the treaty of 911 which allowed recruitment of Rus mercenaries into the Byzantine army without any hindrance, the military clause of the treaty of 944 says something completely different. *The Russian Primary Chronicle* reports that, "...if our [Byzantine] government shall desire of your military assistance for use against our adversaries, they shall communicate with your Great Prince, and he shall send us as many soldiers as we require".[1204] This passage indicates the obligation of the Rus to send military aid to the

mercenaries in other Byzantine campaigns see Blondal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 37-40.; Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 98.

1202 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 74, 76.

1203 Ibid, 74-76.

1204 About the military clauses in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 76.

Byzantine Empire, but not as individual mercenaries who of their own volition wanted to join the ranks of the imperial army, but in a form of regular military units. However, it is necessary to note that this help would arrive only at a prior request from the emperor. Formulated in this way, the military clause of the Byzantine-Rus treaty of 944 refers to the fact that the Rus military forces which would be sent would, in fact, act as allies, so that according to *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, "...from this fact, other countries shall learn what amity the Greeks and the Russes entertain toward each other".[1205] It can be concluded that with this new Byzantine-Rus treaty the Byzantine government received much better organized military aid than with the one from the treaty of 911. If the Rus mercenaries who entered the Byzantine military service so far were of variable quality, which is very likely, now, it seems that this was not the case. Unlike before, the military aid that the prince of Rus was supposed to send to the Byzantine emperor in the treaty of 944 appears to have been regular units composed of highly trained professional warriors.[1206]

The ratification, signing and providing of guarantees in a form of an oath of the treaty of 944 is described in detail in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*.[1207] The author of this text declares that it was brought "...by common consent, we have thus inscribed all this convention upon a double parchment, one portion of which remains in the hands of our [Byzantine] government, with a cross and our names subscribed thereon, while your merchants and agents have signed the other. Your [Rus] representatives shall go forth with the envoys of our [Byzantine] government and conduct them before Igor', Great Prince of Rus', and to his subjects. Upon receipt of this document, they shall then bind themselves by oath to observe the truth as agreed upon between us arid inscribed upon this parchment, wherein our names are written".[1208] *The Russian Primary Chronicle* further reports that when the treaty was to be ratified in Kiev those Rus who had been baptized took their oath that they would not violate the agreed treaty in the Cathedral of St. Elijah in front of the holy cross and a parchment, while the unbaptized Rus and prince Igor took their oath as pagans in front of the parchment, their laid weapons, shield and gold jewellery, as well as in front of the statue of the god Perun.[1209]

In 971, immediately after the defeat of Svyatoslav by Ioannes I Tzimiskes, under the walls of Dorostolon, the peace treaty between the Byzantine Empire and the Rus was

[1205] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 76. About the position of the Rus as an ally of the Byzantine Empire after the treaty of 944 see Blondal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 37.; Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 93-95.; Miller, "Byzantine Treaties", 59, n.10, 62.

[1206] Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 95.

[1207] For a detailed analysis see Oleksiy P. Tolochko, "Church of St. Elijah, 'Baptised Ruses' and the Date of the Second Ruso-Byzantine Treaty", *Byzantinoslavica* 71, no.1-2 (2013): 111-128.

[1208] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 76-77.

[1209] Ibid, 77.

renewed. The author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* informs about the cordial relations which were established between the two warring parties through a political and military clause. According to these, the Rus committed to re-establish friendly relations with the Byzantine Empire, not to wage war against Cherson and the surrounding cities, to prevent other states from attacking the imperial dominions, but also to help militarily if there was a need for it i.e., to provide the Byzantine emperor with strategic military assistance. The ratification, signing and providing of guarantees were the same as for the previously concluded peace treaties, both copies of the treaty in the form of parchment had a signature and seal, and the oath which the Rus took was in front of one of the parchments of the treaty and in the name of the pagan gods Perun and Volos.[1210]

As for the relations with the Rus during the reign of Vladimir, although the sources are silent, it is possible to assume that after the conquest of the city of Cherson and the marriage with the princes Anna "born in purple", the prince of Rus extend the validity of the treaty which was concluded in 971 with his predecessor Svyatoslav, which certainly contained a military clause, for the fact that Skylitzes reports of a military aid sent to Basileios II in the form of a unit that numbered around 6,000 warriors.[1211]

Although the peace treaties which the Byzantine Empire concluded with the states, nations and tribes in the Balkan Peninsula and the Pontic steppe could last up to thirty years, nevertheless, in spite of the long term for which they were signed, it is known that in some cases they were short-lived and deliberately violated, not only by the foreigners but also by the Byzantine government itself. Regardless of this prospect, the treaties were undoubtedly an extremely important tool of the Byzantine diplomacy which could ensure a longer period of peace on the state borders and its wider surroundings, provide security for the imperial provinces in the Balkans, and temporarily increase and improve the military capacity of the imperial army.

[1210] Ibid, 89-90.

[1211] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 319. See also Litavrin, *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus*, 94.

Diplomatic Assets, Means and Arguments

"Now two things in particular contribute to the hegemony of the Romans, namely, our system of honours and our wealth, to which one might add a third: the wise control of the other two and prudence in their distribution"

Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, VI.29

The reason why the Byzantine diplomacy had success in conducting international relations and in achieving its short-term and long-term interests and ends, which were of political and military nature, is that the Byzantine envoys abroad and the imperial government in the capital did not rely only on its oratory skill and the art of rhetoric in negotiation and ratification of treaties, but for this purpose they had at their disposal a wide range of various assets, means and arguments. Sources unequivocally report that in international relations and in the process of negotiations itself with foreign states, nations and tribes, the Byzantines used huge amounts of money (mainly gold coins), imperial aulic titles and various precious items. They presented the primary, all-purpose, means of Byzantine diplomacy, assets which could be applied both during missions abroad and when foreign embassies arrived in Constantinople. When diplomacy was conducted at home, in addition to these primary means, the Byzantines had at their disposal other, secondary, means which could effectuate a positive impact on the negotiation process. In contrast to the assets which had some tangible financial and economic value for the receiver, these were the "abstract" means and influenced the senses of the observer. These secondary means also included the Christian religion, which was frequently and extremely skilfully used by the Byzantine government to pacify an aggressive state or a tribe, or to lure those same polities into the cultural sphere of the Empire, and as an argument by the envoys in negotiations, similar to the historical events of the Byzantine past which were often used in the course of negotiations. It also encompassed various other aspects of the civilizational "prestige" which resulted from Constantinople's splendour and the imperial might, for instance the rich markets, wide forums and streets, events at the hippodrome, but also the numerous imperial and church ceremonies organized by the em-

peror which were held not only inside the wide halls of the magnificent Great Palace, but also in the numerous churches and throughout the forums and streets of the Byzantine capital. These secondary means had their place in the overall process of diplomatic negotiations and played an important role, within the limits of their capabilities, in the task for which they were intended i.e., achieving the Byzantine political and military ends. Another diplomatic means which was reluctantly used for this purpose by the Byzantine Empire were the dynastic marriages, seen as a last resort for the government.

Financial assets

According to Liudprand of Cremona, during its imperial years, which lasted until the end of the 12th century, the Byzantine Empire was one of the richest states in Christendom and far surpassed its neighbours with its "wealth".[1212] Although, except in relation to the Arabs, this statement can be taken as correct, nevertheless, the reason for this perception in the eyes of the foreigners was not in the abundance and wealth of the Byzantine provinces. What distinguished the Byzantine Empire from other Christian European states and peoples in the Middle Ages was actually the level of monetisation and the efficiency of its bureaucracy. Through the established tax system, the Byzantine bureaucratic apparatus was able to collect financial resources from its population, which were then available for effective use for the numerous needs of the state. Most of the resources were used for the support of the army.[1213] However, part of the state budget was constantly used to meet the needs of diplomacy, for which the Byzantine contemporaries often spoke with pride, especially during the reign of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos.[1214] Michael Psellos, teacher of Emperor Michael VII Doukas and a highly influential man in Constantinople at the end of the 11th century, is very explicit in his *Chronicle* about the exceptional role and utility that gold had in the Byzantine foreign policy.

From Michael Psellos attestation that the wealth i.e., the gold coins, "...in particular contribute to the hegemony of the Romans...",[1215] it can be concluded that it had a central place in Byzantine diplomacy, although it was sometimes only one part of the overall assets used by the emperor in the political relations with foreign rulers. Aware that no one

[1212] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 50. This wealth that the Byzantine government collected in the form of tax from its subjects was still less than the financial resources possessed by the Arab Caliphs.

[1213] The author of On Strategy, 2.18-21, points out that the financial system "...is principally concerned with paying the soldiers. Each year, most of the public revenues are spent for this purpose".

[1214] For this view of the Byzantine contemporaries towards Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, see *Theophanes Continuatus*, 448.15-449.3.

[1215] *Michaelis Pselli*, VI.29.6-8.

could remain indifferent to great wealth which would bring the user a more pleasant life, as well as financial and other power, the Byzantine government used its gold and silver to achieve its political and military ends. This also applies to the Byzantine policy towards the Balkans and the Pontic steppe region between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century, where their continuous use is confirmed. Gold, along with various luxury items, was part of the incentives used by Byzantine envoys during their missions to the Rus, Pechenegs, Magyars, the Slavic principalities in the Balkans, and the Bulgarians. It can be assumed that they were a kind of a multifaceted asset by which the Byzantines managed to convince these peoples to do some service for the emperor, mainly military,[1216] to win them over as friends and allies, to pacify their aggressive attitude, or to connect them politically with their state by bringing them within the "hierarchy of states".[1217]

Although at first it seemed that the Byzantine policy of bestowment of gold represented a significant drain on the imperial treasury, however, from a financial point of view it was much cheaper and more efficient than if the Byzantine emperor had constantly relied on the might of his own military forces. The possibility of achieving the desired end without taking risks to wage war in the battlefield influenced the frequent use of gold in Byzantine diplomacy towards the Pontic steppe. There was also the possibility, no matter how small, that some of these financial resources bestowed to foreign rulers, leaders and other powerful individuals would be returned to the imperial coffers through the trade connections which were established with these political entities. But there were several other factors as well. In addition to the socio-economic level of development of their societies, the first factor was the number of nations and tribes that inhabited the Balkans and the regions north of the Black Sea, as well as the "barbaric" and migratory character of the steppe tribes, which further complicated the position of the Byzantine Empire. The second factor was the number of all these tribes and nations, which, probably, did not exceed that of the Byzantines, but the military power they possessed was significantly greater "...for the science of warfare and of ordering troops [on the battlefield] is inbred in them".[1218] As a result of all these factors, as well as due to the Byzantine Empire's acute deficiency of human resources for its imperial army, the use of military forces was completely excluded, or reduced to a basic minimum.[1219] The settlement of the Bulgars in the

[1216] There are a number of events in which in return for the bestowed gold the Byzantines demanded military intervention against their enemy: the treaty with the Magyars in 894, with the Serbian prince during the conflict with Simeon, or with Svyatoslav, the prince of Rus, in 968.

[1217] Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 15.

[1218] Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, VII.3.

[1219] The author of *Das Strategikon*, II.1.8-15, VII.A.4-12, advises the Byzantine *strategoi* to use various military skills against the enemy, because "...as some laymen might imagine, by the number of bodies, by unquestioning boldness, or by plain assault that battles are decided but, under God, by strategy and skill. Strategy makes

Balkans during the 670s, after the imperial army's defeat on the battlefield is evidence that the military response to a "barbaric" threat would definitely not bring a positive outcome. The avoidance of pitch battle with the enemy is emphasized even in the time of the greatest military and political might. In a letter addressed to the emperor Isaakios I Komnenos (1055-1057), Michael Psellos expresses the hope that "...none of those under your command should fall in war. For with how many barbarian heads would you equate one Byzantine head, weather it will be that of javelin-thrower, stone-thrower, herald, or trumpeter? How much better is it that not one of our men should fall in battle, and that all the barbarians should be overcome by peaceful means?"[1220]

The deployment and use of military forces on the battlefield had its down side. First of all, a certain amount of time was needed to mobilize the army and carry out at least the basic tactical training. After being called up and mobilized for an upcoming military campaign, the soldiers were to be paid for their involvement. Furthermore, for a smooth running of the military campaign, additional supplies were needed, such as military equipment, means of transport, food, fodder and clothing.[1221] Most of the time, if not always, the preparations costed the Byzantine economy much more than the gold which would have been bestowed to someone in order to achieve the set ends. An excellent example of the difference between the costs for a military campaign and the financial resources and valuables bestowed as a diplomatic asset is the amount that Kalokyros handed over to Svyatoslav, the prince of Rus. The monetary compensation of 15 *kentenaria* (180,000 *nomismata*) is identical, if not less, to the amount which the Byzantines would have spent if they had recruited their own military forces.[1222] If it is known that the salary of ordinary soldiers who participated in military operations was ca. 10 nomismata, this means that with this sum at least 12,000 soldiers could be mobilized, which represented a significant military force according to the Byzantine military manuals.[1223] However, the amount which the emperor would have spent would have been even greater because of the additional supplies of food and fodder he would have needed to allocate if the hostilities had continued. The burden that would fall on the economy which supplied the military with necessary resources during a protracted campaign would be further increased and the costs would be much higher than the gold and gifts that would be bestowed to the recipient through diplomatic channels. In fact, gold and gifts bestowed as

use of times and places, surprises and various tricks to outwit the enemy with the idea of achieving its objectives even without actual fighting".

1220 For the statement see Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 250.

1221 For more details about the preparations for the failed Cretan campaign in 911, for the campaign in Southern Italy in 935 as well as for the Crete campaign of 949 see *The Book of Ceremonies*, 651-678.

1222 Hanak, "The Infamuos Svjatoslav", 140, n.10.

1223 Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army*, 124.

a present or tribute, like in the case of Svyatoslav, were not always in the amount of 15 *kentenaria* or more. Probably, the amount bestowed was usually much less.[1224] Additionally, the overall costs of the Byzantine government would be further multiplied if the hostilities took place on imperial territory. The destruction, ravaging and looting, as well as the slaughter and capture of the local population meant a disaster for the economy, which, like any other pre-industrial agrarian society, would need several years or decades to fully recover. Another problem was the acute lack of human resources. The Byzantine Empire could not afford a battle with the enemy, because there was no complete certainty that even with victory its military forces would completely deflect the current danger. Also, a direct confrontation would mean a possible loss of human lives on the battlefield, most of them skilled and experienced soldiers, which would lead to a serious undermining of state security in the long term. The only way to stop further hostilities and restore the security was for the emperor to pay the enemy a certain amount of gold and valuable items in exchange for peace and the return of captives.

The constant distribution of part of its wealth to foreign rulers, dignitaries and military leaders from the Pontic steppe and the Balkans eager for booty, the Byzantine government used to its advantage and turned the position of weakness into a position of political might in mutual relations. This policy, regardless of its intended purpose, had within itself an ideological basis derived from Christian norms, the established Byzantine ideology, and a theory of the role which the Empire and its sovereign had in Christendom. The power of persuasion which the gold bestowed by Byzantine envoys had was significant, because unlike the products obtained through trade, these presented a gift from the emperor and thus possessed an imperial stamp, which added an additional value. The Byzantine political and ideological supremacy was further strengthened because gold, as well as the display of wealth during various ceremonies, receptions, or the tour around the city, were probably perceived by these same peoples, and also highlighted by the Byzantines themselves, as a result of the special connection and affection which the Christian God had for the empire and its sovereign. In fact, the bestowment of gold was portrayed as generosity of the emperor by the imperial propaganda, an act of mercy and philanthropy from God's vicegerent on Earth, the guardian of the church and of the "chosen people", an action which, according to Byzantine belief, was in full accordance with the divine order in the universe.[1225]

[1224] Angeliki E. Laiou, "Economic and Noneconomic Exchange", in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 692-693, presents several examples of the amount of the tributes that the Byzantine government gave.

[1225] On the ideological connection of the Byzantine Empire and its emperor with the Christian God in *DAI*, 13.33-38. One such example is written in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 110-111, during Prince Vladimir's

There are several reasons why the Byzantine Empire used gold so often in its relations with the peoples of the Balkans and the Pontic steppe and why they were so easily bribed. One of these was the manner of life of these peoples, the structure and level of development of the society they created. Like any people from this region whose wealth was measured by the number of livestock in the herds they owned,[1226] the Magyars and Pechenegs who represented a confederation of the steppe's nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes that often migrated, were inclined to acquire and accumulate similar movable objects of value, such as gold and other valuables, which could be easily alienated and moved to another location if necessary. The Rus, on the other hand, were only partly stationary, warrior-merchants who mostly acquired their gold coins through trade or raids. Although, unlike the steppe peoples, the life in the Balkans was sedentary, the level of economic and cultural development of the Balkan states could not be compared to that of the Byzantine Empire. This applied to Bulgaria as well, which, despite the fact that it differed from other steppe or Balkan peoples in its strong centralized state organization and military might, the wealth it possessed could in no way match the one that the emperor controlled.[1227] This socio-economic situation made the states and tribes of the Balkan Peninsula and the Pontic steppe, unlike the Arabs who surpassed the Byzantine Empire in terms of wealth,[1228] to be so easily seduced by gold. This is very vividly described by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos in *De Administrando Imperio*, especially in the part about the exceptional greed of the Pechenegs.[1229]

Gold in form of coins was frequently used as a diplomatic asset of buying peace, preventing immediate military danger or ending conflicts, a kind of a "financial stimulus" given to the enemy due to a defeat suffered in the battlefield, or the inability to respond militarily to aggression. It could be bestowed in one instalment (like to the Bulgarians in a large number of cases, to the Rus in 907 and to the Magyars in 934) or on an annual basis if a formal-legal agreement was concluded, with obligation to pay the amount depending on the duration of the peace treaty. The amount of the annual tribute could remain the same or be increased, depending on the course and the outcome of the negotiations.

embassy to Constantinople. See also Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 11. In diplomacy gold was perceived as a sign of prestige and power over others, but also as a sign of God's favour towards the emperor. For more details see Laiou, "Economic and Noneconomic Exchange", 692-693, and Shepard, "Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples", 173.

1226 *DAI*, 2.6.

1227 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 50, reports that the Byzantines "...surpass all these people in wealth as they do also in wisdom".

1228 According to the author of *Campaign Organisation and Tactics*, 21.27-29, "...the land of the Agarenes [is] so productive and abounding in so many crops".

1229 *DAI*, 6.8-9, 7.8-17.

Such multi-year tribute for the duration of the peace treaty was paid by the Byzantine Empire to Bulgaria several times throughout the reign of Simeon and Petar. Gold was also used to avoid immediate military danger, such as the attempt of the Bulgarians in 904 to enter the city of Thessalonica after a short-lived occupation by the Arabs, or the military campaign of Igor, the prince of Rus, in 944. This diplomatic asset proved to be highly successful in forging military alliances. Gold was bestowed to the Magyars in 894, to the Serbian ruler Petar in 917, and to the Rus in 968 to conclude an alliance. An annual alliance treaty was concluded with the Pechenegs. It was used to disrupt or annul the military alliances directed against the Byzantine Empire. It seems that the gold offered by the emperor was the main reason why towards the end of the conflict with Russia in 969-971 the Pechenegs and the Magyars distanced themselves from Svyatoslav and eventually became his enemies.

In fact, the bestowing of gold was not only a means of persuasion, but at the same time a guarantee for respecting the concluded treaty, regardless of whether it was an enemy or an ally. They were some sort of compensation for the booty which the enemy would get through looting or, if it was new Byzantine ally, a reward for the difficulties that he would encounter in fulfilling the provisions of the agreed treaty. The amount of gold bestowed for this purpose was often more than generous. For example, according to Leo the Deacon in 968 the Byzantine Empire gave Svyatoslav, the prince of Rus, subsidy in amount of 15 *kentenaria* of gold in exchange for an alliance. Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos reports that Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos bestowed such great wealth to the Serbian ruler Časlav that he successfully "...organized and populated the country [over which he ruled]".[1230]

In addition to military, gold also had its own political purpose. Gold was a very powerful asset to undermine and weaken the political position of foreign rulers. This was achieved through financial support of a neighbouring country or members of the aristocratic families from his own country. Bestowing of gold to members of his court would not, in principle, lead to a complete upheaval of the current political balance in the country and his dethronement, but would reduce the difference between the ruler and other leading families, thereby making his political position highly unstable.[1231] Furthermore, such a situation could make the foreign ruler more inclined to the Byzantine political

[1230] Ibid, 32.128-145.

[1231] During her visit to Constantinople, Princess Olga received as a gift from the Byzantine emperor fifteen times more *miliaresia* than her "nephew" or the envoys of the other Rus "archons", a sum which was sufficient to change the political situation in the country. *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 83, indicates that this move of the emperor was not out of generosity, due to the fact that after returning from Constantinople Konstantinos VII asked the princes of Rus for military help. See also Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 64-65.

interests, an advantage which would have been unquestionably used by the emperor if needed. The success of this measure would have been even more significant if the ruler was known to be hostile, for the political instability which would arise afterwards would prevent an eventual military intervention.

Except for these circumstances, gold was extremely important part of Byzantine diplomacy in other political situations as well. These were mostly disputes where the use of Byzantine military power would have further complicated the political problem. One such example is the Byzantine diplomatic activity which was directed towards Bulgaria in the context of Boris's baptism and the acceptance of Christianity. Here, gold was not the main asset of the Byzantine government, but one of the auxiliary ones whose sole purpose was to facilitate the diplomatic process and negotiations which were conducted, in order to win over the opposite side and convince them of their friendly intentions. Sources report that the Byzantine Empire wholeheartedly started to display and use its wealth in an attempt to win over the Bulgarians. For this purpose, the Byzantines bestowed gold, presented as a gift from the emperor to the Bulgarian ruler. However, one cannot rule out the possibility that some of this gold and gifts were bribes, given to individuals in Bulgaria who would then act in Byzantine favour. The auxiliary role of gold can be seen in another situation, where it represented only one segment, an integral part, of another diplomatic asset used by the Byzantines, as, for example, when conferring imperial aulic titles.

The frequent use of gold as a primary asset in order to prevent the military and political objectives of the hostile states and nations produced good results. These have proven to be extremely effective in preventing the current military danger or potential enemy aggression. Gold also helped to achieve the desired outcome of the Byzantine offensive or defensive military engagements, situations which are mentioned in the sources and occupy a central place in the narration, as well as for other political and ideological ends which may or may not had, ultimately, a military aspect in them. However, this Byzantine policy was not without failure or consequences. Sometimes it did not achieve the intended goal, or it was short-lived. Also, there was a possibility that this measure would fail and give an opposite effect i.e., the Byzantine Empire would become the target of a military attack only because of the way it usually deterred the military danger, by buying off peace and bestowing in return parts of its wealth. Even so, despite this negative aspect, the act of bestowment of gold in form of coins to foreign rulers and dignitaries remained the basic pillar of the Byzantine diplomacy in the centuries that followed.

Imperial aulic titles

The second pillar on which the Byzantine hegemony and political supremacy was based, according to the statement of Michael Psellos, were the imperial aulic titles and honours which derived from these. Primarily established for internal use, more precisely for honouring individuals who distinguished themselves in the service of the state and the Byzantine emperor, as a result of the benefits they offered, they soon became an important diplomatic asset in attracting countless powerful foreigners (rulers of states, leaders of tribes, or other influential individuals) into the Byzantine political orbit which would eventually lead not only to a rapprochement, but also to the identification of their interests with those of the Empire. This frequent conferring of aulic titles by the Byzantine government throughout the centuries, a procedure witnessed countless times in various sources, and their wholehearted acceptance by the foreign rulers or other dignitaries, indicates that it was, in fact, a powerful diplomatic asset in Byzantine hands to win over a friend or possible military ally, but also to pacify an aggressive neighbour or other potential enemy.

Imperial titles had already played an important role in regulating the political relations between the Byzantine emperor and the rulers of polities from the Balkans and the Pontic steppe throughout the Byzantine history. In the 7th century Emperor Heraklios rewarded Kubrat, the leader of "Old Great Bulgaria" and an ally of the Byzantine Empire, with the aulic title of *patrikios*.[1232] Such an example is also the conferment of the high Byzantine title of *kaisar* to the Bulgarian khan Terbel by Justinian II, second in importance in the empire right after the title of *basileus*.[1233] In the same way, some of the leaders of the Sklaviniai in the Balkans were brought into the Byzantine political sphere. Confirmation of this is the discovered seal of Tihomir, the *archon* of the Belegezitai, dated around the first half of the 8th century, who had received the title of *spatharios* from Constantinople.[1234] The *Cletorologion* of Philotheos, probably composed in the late 9th century, clearly indicates that a large number of foreign high dignitaries, holders of Byzantine titles, attended the imperial ceremonies organized by Emperor Leon VI in the halls of the Great Palace.[1235]

The Byzantine government had also introduced a number of titles specifically intended to be conferred to foreign rulers and other dignitaries. The variety, it seems, was of great benefit to the Byzantines despite the confusion it caused in the hierarchical

[1232] Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 5.
[1233] *Nikephoros*, 42.61.
[1234] Živković, *Južni Sloveni,* 163.
[1235] Oikonomides, *Les Listes*, 164-165, 176-177, n.170.

order of honours. When the bearers of two different titles of almost identical meaning met, both could feel that they had been bestowed with a higher honour, thus prompting them to show greater loyalty to the Byzantine emperor.[1236] Konstantinos VII in *The Book of Ceremonies* presents a list of titles that were intended exclusively for foreign rulers. It consisted of the titles *exousiaokrator, exousiarches, exousiastes, archon of archons, archegos, archegetes, archon, exarchon, pro(h)egemon, hegemonarches, hegemon, kathegemon, dynastes, prohegetor, hegetor, protos, ephoros, hyperechon, diataktor, panhypertatos, hypertatos, koiranos, megalodoxos, rex, prinkips, doux, synkletikos, ethnarches, toparches, satrapes, phylarchos, stratiarchos, stratelates, taxiarchos, megaloprepestatos, megaloprepes, pepothemenos, endoxotatos, endoxos, periphanestatos, periphanes, peribleptos, peribleptotatos, eugenestatos, eugenes, ariprepestatos, ariprepes, aglaotatos, aglaos, eritimotatos, eritimos, gerousiotatos, gerousios, phaidimotatos, phaidimos, kyriotatos, kyrios, entimotatos, entimos, pro(h)egoumenos, hegoumenos, olbiotatos, olbios, boulephoros, arogos, epikouros, epirrophos, amanto*r.[1237]

But these titles were not of such great importance as the aulic titles intended for Byzantine subjects, with which, as I have already pointed out, important foreigners were also honoured. The most important among these was the title of *patrikios*. Intended at first for the oldest families of Rome, from the 5th century onward this title was often conferred to foreign rulers and other dignitaries, who were favoured by the Byzantine government.[1238] Liudprand of Cremona indicates that this practice was in force during the 10th century among the peoples of the Balkans. He reports that during his mission in Constantinople in 968 at the Easter banquet organized in the Great Palace by Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, one of the Bulgarian envoys attending the celebration was a *patrikios*.[1239] Apart from this title, foreigners could also be conferred with other titles which were intended exclusively for Byzantine subjects, for example *spatharokandidatos*. However, these were mostly individuals who entered the ranks of the imperial retinue, where after many years of successful, mostly military service, managed to rise to a certain position of honour, but also rulers and dignitaries who needed to be won over because of the political and military importance they held for the Byzantine Empire at that time.[1240]

The goal that the Byzantine government wanted to achieve by conferring these honours on foreigners was multiple: to bring the individual or people (if the holder of the

[1236] Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 133.

[1237] More details on the list of imperial titles which were intended specifically for foreign rulers and other dignitaries in *The Book of Ceremonies*, 679. See also Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 132.

[1238] For the title of *patrikios* as a means of forming the international community of "family of kinship" see Lampakis, *Byzantine diplomacy*, 42-46.

[1239] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 250.

[1240] Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 64.; Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 132.

title was their ruler) into the "hierarchy of states" thereby binding them in a kind of political bond of dependence and subservience to the emperor; to flatter his vanity through the prestige he would receive in the eyes of other rulers or his subordinates as a result of political connection and closeness with the Byzantine Empire; to prevent his aggressive intentions, if he had any, through the political influence or financial allowance derived from the annual monetary payment that was owed to the holder of the honour; to emphasize the position that the ruler and his people had in the *oecumene*, and through that the importance they had for the Byzantine Empire; and to establish a political network of allies and dependent states around its own borders which, in accordance with the needs of the state and the treaties concluded, would, if necessary, come to the aid of the Byzantine emperor. All of these aspects will be analysed.

Primarily, the imperial aulic titles represented a sort of socio-social hierarchy at the top of which the emperor was placed. By accepting the title that depending on the importance the person had for Byzantine interests was usually handed over personally by the emperor, as in the case of the Magyar *karchas* Bulcsu, this same person became part of his retinue. From a political and ideological point of view, the personal transfer of the title established closer and stronger ties between the giver and the recipient of the honour. Like the Byzantines who were conferred with titles, so the foreigners who were also bearers of the same title, according to the political and ideological theory, were bound as members of this hierarchy, or rather of this imperial entourage, to loyalty to the giver of honour, the Byzantine emperor. From that point of view, not only the Byzantines, but also the foreign holders of titles were perceived by the emperor, who was at the top of this hierarchy, as subjects who had to work for the Byzantine interests. This political and ideological dependence of the titles, as well as the military aspect, is clearly observed in the letter of the Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos sent to the ruler of Abazgia who had the imperial title of *exousiastes* (ἐξουσιαστὴς), where, after his question about how the war with Simeon progressed, he added that, "...in accordance with the imperial requirement and declaration, and holding fast to the integrity of your friendship, be constant in your readiness to fight with us; and, should need invoke, you will as a grateful friend certainly do what is asked of you, so that in this also your virtue and genuine friendship may be manifest".[1241]

There were several factors due to which the imperial titles were wholeheartedly accepted by the rulers and dignitaries in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe. They were of a political and ideological, as well as of practical nature, although they cannot be so

[1241] Nicholas, *Letters*, 162.15-19. For the services provided by the Armenian rulers conferred with imperial titles see *DAI*, 43.115-117. Also, Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 17.

clearly differentiated, for even to practicality one can assign something ideological and vice versa, to the ideological something practical. The greatness that the Byzantine aulic titles had in the eyes of the medieval man from these areas was a result of the political prestige that the Byzantine Empire had over other states, nations and tribes, which emanated from its antiquity and the reference to the heritage and continuity of the Roman state, a fact often highlighted by the Byzantines themselves, but also from the wealth and military power which, as stated by foreigners, it possessed. The perception of grandeur was further enhanced by the Byzantine political ideology according to which the state and its sovereign had a special place and role in the world. It saw itself as a sole Christian empire, universal instrument through which God's plan for salvation of mankind was carried out, whose destiny would last until his second coming. With such an emphasized role of the Byzantine Empire in the world, at the same time surpassing other polities in these regions in every way, whether financially, politically or militarily, it was essential for the foreign rulers and chieftains to establish contact and maintain good relations with the emperor, because if they did not take that step, they could be politically isolated from their neighbours or appear small and insignificant in the eyes of other noble families in their court or political retinue.[1242]

Apart from political, the Byzantine aulic titles, at least the majority of these, also had their financial side. For the bearers of the titles, a monetary allowance followed, termed as roga (ῥόγα), which was paid annually during the Easter holidays. Along with some aulic titles, clothes that had specific markings on them were also bestowed, a kind of a status symbol which made their possession probably even more attractive.[1243] With societies that were not as economically developed and did not have wealth like the Byzantine Empire, it is hard to believe that the peoples of the Balkans and the Pontic steppe were immune to the advantages which came along with the title. Depending on the rank in the Byzantine hierarchy of honours, not only the amount of the monetary allowance depended, but also the look of the clothing and its specific characteristics, of course if they were entitled to it. The ceremonial robe for the court title of *patrikios*, a title like the one of Michael of Zachlumia and the kings of Croatia, was known as a skaramangion (σκαραμάγγιον), an embroidered tunic made of a highly sought-after textile and a purple sagion (σαγίον).[1244] However, it should be noted that not only titles with benefits were

[1242] Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 64-65.

[1243] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 200-202. Also, Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 49-50.; Shlosser, "Weaving a Precious Web", 48-49.

[1244] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 251, 254. About the ceremonial robe of the *patrikios* see Elisabeth Piltz, "Middle Byzantine Court Costume", in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 45.; Jennifer L. Ball, *Byzantine dress: representations of secular dress in eight to twelve centuries painting* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 43.

requested. Even those which did not received salary or clothes were also highly desired and sought after.[1245]

Imperial aulic titles also offered other privileges which further increased the prestige of the bearer. The higher the aulic title, the greater the prestige, because it showed not only the Byzantine ruler's affection towards the holder of the title, but also the military and political importance he had for the Byzantine Empire. This is best seen through the numerous imperial ceremonies and banquets organized by the Byzantine emperors in the Great Palace. Depending on the title, the individual's place in the Chrysotriklinium reception hall also depended. In case the bearers had a higher title in the hierarchy of honours, they could be seated closer to the emperor or at the same table, which gave them the chance to make personal contact with him. If they had lower titles in rank, they were placed further away from the Byzantine emperor. This ceremonial protocol actually represented a clear determination, but also a public imperial demonstration of the importance that certain individuals had for the Byzantine Empire, as well for the influence, prestige and political power that the holders of the titles had among themselves within the *oecumene*, but also in relation to others who were not part of it.[1246]

The sources report of a frequent use of the aulic titles in the period between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century. The Byzantine government succeeded in its diplomatic network, which was aimed mostly at maintaining balance in the region, but also at achieving political hegemony over the former imperial territories, of course if this was possible, in order to incorporate almost all the rulers and other important dignitaries from the Balkans and Pontic steppe into the Byzantine sphere of influence through conferring of imperial titles. If one looks at the protocol list in *The Book of Ceremonies*, one can notice that the Byzantine government granted the title of archon (ἄρχοντος) to the Balkan and northern rulers and leaders. The reason, probably, should be sought in the conferment procedure which, it seems, was incorporated into the protocol of establishing diplomatic relations between two rulers, which the emperor, in accordance with his role as God's representative on Earth, probably wanted to present it not only as a gift, but also as an act of his sincere generosity and honest gratitude. It can be assumed that the same procedure was undertaken during the conferment of an imperial title to other dignitaries who, apart from the ruler, also possessed considerable military and political power. Although a conclusion about the existence of a certain pattern can

[1245] Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 132.

[1246] The displeasure of *Liudprand of Cremona*, 250-251, which arose from the fact that he was placed behind the Bulgarian envoys during the Easter celebration sufficiently indicates the connection between the place and position of the individual during the ceremony and the political importance he had in relation to the host who arranged it, but also to the other guests in medieval politics.

be drawn from this protocol, on the other hand, if we observe the period under analysis, this procedure of conferring titles and honours on foreigners was probably not planned in the long term because no evidence can be found in the sources which would confirm it. It was more of a spontaneous process, since in most cases it is a consequence and reaction to certain political turmoil and conflicts in the region, although the sources inform that in some instances of conferring aulic titles there was a certain long-term strategy.

In essence, the conferment of titles represented a diplomatic measure through which the Byzantine government tried to incorporate foreign rulers into the *oecumene* and bind them in a political and ideological dependence to the emperor, for by accepting the title they, according to the Byzantine political philosophy, became part of his court retinue, and therefore his subjects. Titles, basically, represented a kind of a privilege, with the acceptance of which one entered the ranks of the Byzantine elite. Apart from flattering the wearer's vanity, the title was securing him with a definite position in the Byzantine "hierarchy of states" or "family of kinship", and through that prestige a certain political influence among the other rulers who were part of it, as well as an annual financial subsidy from the Byzantine government for the services he did in the name of the emperor.[1247] It can be assumed that, from an ideological point of view, with this process, some kind of personal relationship with the emperor was probably formed due to the direct diplomatic correspondence. However, it must be noted that the end result of this diplomatic measure was mostly in favour of the Byzantine Empire, because of the fact that the sources provide a multitude of testimonies where the foreign holders of imperial aulic titles were gradually assimilated and started to identify themselves with the Byzantine interests.

Titles granted to the rulers and other influential dignitaries from the peoples and states in the Balkans and beyond indicate that apart from the political agenda of the emperor (their incorporation into the Byzantine political and cultural orbit), they were also conferred for ending a military conflict, pacifying a potential enemy, conquering a certain city or territory, but also in order to establish a military alliance or to maintain it. The title of *basileus*, which was bestowed on the Bulgarian ruler Simeon by the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos during the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict, and recognized by the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, was granted in order to end the protracted war in the Balkans and to conclude peace.

[1247] Nicolas Oikonomides, "The Role of the Byzantine State in the Economy", in *The Economic History of Byzantium* Vol.1, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 1008-1013.; John F. Haldon, "Social élites, wealth and power", in *The Social History of Byzantium*, ed. John F. Haldon (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 193-194. See also Nicolas Oikonomides, "Title and Income at the Byzantine Court", in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 199-215.

Although the conferment of the title *basileus* to Simeon was a significant concession by the Byzantine Empire, nevertheless, this did not represent a precedent in its history. This title had already been previously granted to a foreign ruler, more precisely, to the Frankish ruler Charlemagne by Pope Leo III. After several years of protesting and indignation, the Byzantine government, however, finally recognized this title.[1248] Hence, the conferring or recognition of high titles to foreigners was not something unknown in Byzantine history. However, it must be noted that although the title of *basileus* which was granted to Simeon implies a certain equality, nevertheless, in the Byzantine ideology it did not have the same hierarchical position and power as Βασιλεὺς τῶν Ῥωμαίων, a title which according to the established ideology arose from God's will,[1249] and not by any earthly authority. The conferment of the title *basileus of Bulgaria* to Petar did not differ much from that granted to Simeon under his military pressure and ideologically did not threaten the Byzantine political hegemony. Although the Bulgarian sovereign had a high title, he was still hierarchically subordinate to the Byzantine emperor who held the highest position in Christendom. According to the recorded protocols in *The Book of Ceremonies*, the *basileus of Bulgaria* was behind the Caliph of Baghdad and the Frankish King, but before the client states in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Armenia.[1250] One of the reasons for this position in the "family of rulers" was the absence of the formulation of divine origin in regards to the authority of *basileus of Bulgaria* in the preserved Byzantine diplomatic correspondence, which, in turn, indirectly indicated that his conferment was made by a certain earthly authority. Thus, according to the Byzantine political theory, the subordination of the Bulgarian ruler to the will of the *basileus of the Romans* was confirmed, as a result of the political idea that he was the only one whose authority was, in fact, bestowed according to God's will. Furthermore, through the preserved diplomatic protocol, it is noted that the "spiritual brotherhood" bestowed to Simeon by Romanos I Lekapenos was taken away from his son and heir, Petar, after the concluded treaty. In the Byzantine "family of kinship" he was named as "spiritual son" which is a clear confirmation of the position and ideological subordination of the emperor of Bulgaria.[1251]

It can be assumed that the most influential Bulgarian dignitaries, at least some of them, apparently as a result of the close ties established between the two ruling courts with the marriage between Petar and Maria Lekapena, were holders of the title of *patriki-*

[1248] Treadgold, *History*, 430.; Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije*, 202.

[1249] For the divine origin of the Byzantine imperial power, see the letters of Nicholas, *Letters*, 8.47-48. About the difference in the titles of *basileus* and *basileus of the Romans* see *Obolensky, The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 108-109.

[1250] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 686-692.

[1251] Ibid, 690.

os.[1252] The imperial aulic titles acquired and possessed by the Serbian rulers during this period, also reported in the source material, such as that of Michael of Zachlumia who was an *anthypatos* and *patrikios* (ἀνθυπάτου καὶ πατρικίου), were conferred by the Byzantine government in order to acquire them as allies.[1253] The Magyar dignitaries from the middle of the 10th century were personally honoured by the Byzantine emperor with the title of *patrikios* [1254] and named as friends (φίλοι).[1255] The purpose of this act was to pacify the Magyars, prevent their raids on Byzantine territory and win them over as allies. In contrast, the sources do not report of any conferment to Rus or Pecheneg potentates other than their rulers, although the same sources mention the Pecheneg envoys staying in Constantinople as guarantees of the adherence to the treaty as "friends" of the emperor.[1256] In the late 10th and early 11th century Emperor Basileios II not only used imperial aulic titles to acquire allies in his fight against Samuil Kometopoulos, but he also used these frequently to achieve an immediate goal on the battlefield during his military campaigns. In this way, Basileios II managed to reconquer the cities of Berroea and Skopje (although the latter only temporarily), as well as Dyrrachion on the Adriatic coast. After the death of Jovan Vladislav in 1018, the Byzantine emperor managed to pacify and win over the other dignitaries in the already conquered Samuil's state by conferring titles and honours.

Primarily established for internal use, this system of reward grew into an important diplomatic asset of the Byzantine government. One of the reasons why this state system of honours was so frequently used by the Byzantines can be seen during the siege of Pernikos e.g., avoiding large numbers of unnecessary casualties in one's own ranks during military campaigns or battles.[1257] The second was the way in which the power was transferred from the central level to its most remote areas in the medieval states. Since the control over a particular district or city, as well as the loyalty of the local population of that same region, was usually gained and maintained by securing the loyalty of the commander of the fort or the governor of a district, it could be most easily lost in the same manner. The conferment of imperial titles to Samuil's commanders and district governors had the same effect as waging war or fighting on the battlefield.

[1252] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 251.

[1253] About Michael, the ruler of Zachlumia in *DAI*, 33.16.

[1254] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231. Such was the case with the "head of the Hunnic people" where the emperor Herakleios was his godfather and was conferred with the title of *patrikios*. See *Nikephoros*, 9.1-9. Also, Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 40.

[1255] According to *DAI*, 40.63-64, the envoy from the Arpad clan was a friend of the Byzantine emperor.

[1256] *DAI*, 8.18. They probably played a similar role as that of the representatives of the Bulgarians and Saracens in the imperial ceremonies and banquets of the late 9th and early 10th centuries. For more details about the Bulgarians and the Saracens Oikonomides, *Les Listes*, 162-163, 166-167.

[1257] This was noticed as early as the time of *Das Strategikon*, II.1.8-15, VII.A.4-12. The application of this strategic principle of warfare is emphasized and repeated in the military treatises of the later period.

The end result was conquest of territories from the enemy. Or more precisely, these were handed over to the Byzantine emperor. From an ideological and political point of view, by accepting imperial aulic title, the individual simultaneously recognized the Byzantine *taxis*, and thus the supreme authority of the emperor. In fact, they became his subjects who obeyed his will. Thus, after the surrender of the fortress in the hands of Basileios II, Dobromir was moved to the city of Thessalonica, and Roman-Simeon to Abydos in Asia Minor. The third factor why the imperial titles were used in diplomacy was for ideological and political reasons. Byzantine society, or rather its elite, extremely praised the victory over the enemy, or the reintegration of the lost territories, if it was carried out without the shedding of "Roman blood". This is reported not only by Skylitzes in his *Synopsis Historion*, but also by the chroniclers of past centuries.[1258] This kind of victory, without blood and with defection of the first men of the enemy in the ranks of the Byzantine emperor, was a powerful propaganda tool of the imperial government.[1259] By conducting such a policy, the emperor could actually present himself to his subjects as a sovereign who acted as a guardian of Christians and took care for their well-being. Also, through this diplomatic measure, he was most likely trying to present himself as a merciful master, who forgave all "hostile" actions and accepted back, seen according to the Byzantine perception, the subjects who illegally "renegaded" from him. On the other hand, this policy of bribing and defection of the most influential people of the enemy's leader could lead to a weakening of his position, as well as to a violation of the authority he had over his subject, which would then affect his overall military activities on the battlefield.

However, accepting the offered aulic titles was not a quick and easy process. Apparently, before the agreement was finalized, as Skylitzes reports on the events with Krakras near the city of Pernikos in 1004, it was preceded by long negotiations where the Byzantine envoy in accordance with the established medieval norms of behaviour and principles of negotiation (noted in *On Envoys*), convinced the other to accept the

[1258] More details about the conduct of the so-called "noble wars" by the Byzantine emperors in Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 326, and *Theophane*s, 447.

[1259] According to the Byzantine belief, offensive warfare could easily lead to the loss of numerous "Christian" lives and the destruction of the economic well-being of the Byzantine subjects, something that was ideologically at odds with Christian norms and the established role of the emperor as guardian of the "chosen people". For the existence of such a view in the Byzantine society see *Das Strategikon*, VII.A.49-52, VIII.1.7. By conducting a reckless aggressive military policy, the emperor would have completely undermined his position, because in the eyes of his own subjects the human losses would have been interpreted as a kind of divine punishment due to the emperor's deviation from the path of righteousness. When a defeat was suffered by the enemies, it was accepted by the Byzantines as a punishment for the sins they had committed in the past. The moment the Byzantine Empire returned to the path of righteousness, its victorious campaign would than begun again. This belief was generally accepted, even by those for whom warfare was a daily occupation.

"goodness" which was offered by the emperor. It appears to have been derived "...by flattery, [various] promises or other suggestions...",[1260] namely by glorifying the character of the opponent, pointing out the value of Christian ethics, as well as offering a bribe. Under the term "other suggestions" it can be assumed that the use of the Byzantine military forces as a means of coercion was meant to scare the enemy and further convince them of the fairness of the terms given by the Byzantine emperor. However, the reason for such a great allure of the imperial aulic titles mostly lay in the privileges which came along with these, the prestige, the strong political influence in the society, as well as the significant financial resources bestowed in a form of an annual salary. Nevertheless, the application of titles in diplomacy did not always bring success for the emperor. It is necessary to note that the holders of Byzantine titles also knew to rebel and act against the Byzantine interests, as in the case of the ruler of Zachlumia Michael, Samuil's commander Nikoulitzas[1261] or the Magyar dignitary Bulcsu, or just to refuse the offered honour of an aulic title. Krakras, the governor of Pernikos, is one such example. According to Skylitzes, this associate of Samuil did not succumb to Basileios II flattery and refused his generous proposal.[1262]

In the period between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century, the imperial aulic titles proved to be an extremely important asset of the Byzantine diplomacy. With their help, the Byzantine government managed to establish at its borders and beyond, certain political and ideological relationship of dependence from the Byzantine emperor among near and more distant states, nations and tribes by bringing their rulers into the imperial court retinue, a step with which, from an ideological point of view, they became his subjects, and through it gained entry into the Byzantine elite and its sphere of political influence. Imperial aulic titles allowed the creation of allies in the moments when it was most needed, to calm down the aggressive tendencies of the neighbouring polities, but they also made possible to achieve a specific military goal on the battlefield. Despite the occasional setbacks which occurred, the conferment of titles to important foreigners lived up to the expectations of the Byzantine government. With the military forces and other diplomatic means, in the beginning of the 11th century they succeeded to expand the Byzantine hegemony over the entire territory of the Balkans and after four centuries to re-establish the border of the Byzantine Empire on the banks of the Danube River.

[1260] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 329.
[1261] Ibid, 343.
[1262] Ibid, 329.

"State" gifts

The bestowment of various luxurious and precious items as gifts was an essential ritual and "visual" part of medieval diplomacy.[1263] Before the official negotiations had begun each party was bound to accept the generously offered gift from the other, and the behaviour accompanying this protocol was, in a sense, some kind of a formal pretence and social deception. The exchange of gifts was based on obligation and self-interest: the gift giver was in a position of superiority as long as his donation was not reciprocated and only if the gift returned was not of equal value. Sources report that the intention of the sovereigns was to send gifts that were more valuable than those they received, in order to find themselves in a position of superiority over the other.[1264] In regards to Byzantine diplomacy, in order to achieve this superiority its policy was to impress the foreigners when they arrived in the city of Constantinople, but also when a Byzantine envoy was sent abroad on a mission. The first step taken by the Byzantines, as with any effective act of ritualization in international relations, was to create the right atmosphere before diplomatic talks and negotiations had begun. For this purpose, the Byzantine government wholeheartedly used its civilizational and imperial "prestige". When foreign embassies were received, the Byzantine emperor had a considerable advantage in creating the necessary atmosphere for negotiations in the grandeur of the Great Palace and the magnificence of the imperial ceremonies.[1265]

The first diplomatic act of the envoys during their protocolary reception in a foreign country was, after paying respect and bowing (προσκύνησις), and answering the usual questions from the host, to carry out the handing over of the gifts he brought for the ruler of the state where they were sent. The fact that this was an important ritual protocol in medieval diplomacy can undoubtedly be concluded from numerous sources, like the embassy send to the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil,[1266] the Byzantine envoy to Caliph al-Mu'izz,[1267] in *The Book of Ceremonies*, where the reception of the great delegation of the Sasanian Empire is recorded, and a general pattern for reception of foreign envoys in

[1263] For the gifting of presents as an indispensable part of medieval diplomacy, see *Liudprand of Cremona*, 197. Also, Cutler, "Significant Gifts", 79-81.

[1264] Cutler, "Significant Gifts", 88.

[1265] Robin Cormack, "But is it Art?", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992), 220-221.

[1266] According to Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes I*, 320, Nasr ibn al-Azhar had with him "...presents, nearly a thousand musk-bottles, silk garments, much saffron, and curious and new things".

[1267] Stern, "An embassy", 244-245, reports that the Byzantine envoy brought Caliph al-Mu'izz "...many gifts, gold and silver vessels inlaid with jewels, embroidery, silk, nard, and other precious articles which they have".

the great hall in Magnaura is presented,[1268] and also in *On Envoys*, where the importance of "state" gifts in envoy's diplomatic activities is underlined,[1269] in *De Administrando Imperio*,[1270] in the Byzantine military manuals,[1271] as well as in Liudprand's *Retribution* where he describes in length the reception in the Grand Palace during his first mission to Constantinople.[1272] In fact, this act of public gifting of various luxury items through generally accepted ritualized procedures made this activity of medieval diplomacy not a bribe in the eyes of observers, but a kind of honour bestowed by one ruler to another. From the value of the presented gifts, one could be able to indicate not only the attitude of the giver towards the recipient and his political importance, but also the position and might of this same giver in international relations.

During the reign of the Macedonian dynasty the imperial government, just like its predecessors, especially the emperors of the late antique period,[1273] abundantly used various luxurious and precious items, textiles, silk, clothes, furniture, manuscripts, animals,[1274] and every other high-quality product which was provided through the state economy in their diplomacy. However, the authors of the Byzantine sources do not present in more details on these gifts as a result of the aversion they acquired towards this measure of the emperor as a result of the immense greed of the surrounding nations and tribes, such as the Pechenegs, who were "...shameless in their demand for generous gifts".[1275] This can be clearly observed in the statement of Leo the Deacon who describes how the Byzantine envoy seduced the prince of Rus "...with gifts and enticing him with tempting words (since all the Scythians are exceptionally greedy and particularly gluttonous, they are susceptible to the promising and taking of bribes)".[1276] Unlike the Byzantine authors, *The Book of Ceremonies* contains a detailed list of the gifts that Emperor Romanos II, in addition to a

[1268] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 406, 568-569.
[1269] On Strategy, 43.32-39.
[1270] *DAI*, 43.18.
[1271] *Three Treaties on Imperial Military Expeditions*, C.225-249.
[1272] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 198-199.
[1273] Nechaeva, *Embassies*, 163-169.
[1274] Cormack, "But is it Art?", 228-236. For textiles and silk, Anna Muthesius, "Silken diplomacy", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992), 237-248.; Shlosser, "Weaving a Precious Web", 48-49. About manuscripts see John Lowden, "The luxury book as a diplomatic gift", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992), 249-260. About animals as diplomatic gifts see Nicolas Drocourt, "Les animaux comme cadeaux d'ambassade entre Byzance et ses voisins (VII-XII siècle)", in *Byzance et ses périphéries. Hommage à Alain Ducellier*, éd. Bernard Doumerc et Christophe Picard (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Midi, 2004), 67-93.
[1275] *DAI*, 7.8-11. See also Cutler, "Gift and Gift Exchange", 255-256.
[1276] *Leo the Deacon*, 128.

sum of gold of 1 *kentenaria*, was ready to give to Hugo, the king of Italy, if he conducted a military intervention in Southern Italy against the rebellious Lombards duchies.[1277]

The main reason behind these shameless demands of the foreigners, especially the northern peoples, was because, unlike the products obtained through trade, these were a gift from the emperor and as such they possessed an imperial mark which in a way created an added value. It should also be pointed to the probability that the skill and capacity of craftsmen from the Pontic steppe and the Balkans, or from other border regions, to create and craft sophisticated items of such high quality was not up to the standard of that of the Byzantine Empire. However, the most important factor behind these demands was actually the ideological and material value which some of these luxury items possessed, which arose from the imperial propaganda about the "special" relationship that was established and existed between the Byzantine emperor and God, and was wholeheartedly accepted by the Balkan and "Scythian" nations.[1278] It was further reinforced after some of the luxury products crafted in the imperial workshops were imprinted with an ideological and religious aura of mysticism, as in the case of diadems, imperial robes and Greek fire,[1279] or had an export ban imposed on them, for instance high quality red or purple textiles,[1280] which in turn made all of these items even more desirable to the foreigners. Another reason behind the foreigners' desire to own these material goods was because it meant political might, a higher position in their social hierarchy,[1281] as well as prestige among the local population and beyond, as a result of the fact that these items, apart from the financial, also possessed a concept of ideological and material value that was imprinted by the Byzantines themselves.[1282]

What the sources confirm is frequent implementation of this policy of bestowing "state" gifts by the Byzantine emperor in the period between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century towards the states and peoples in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe region. In regards to the Balkans, the majority of diplomatic contacts were

1277 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 661.

1278 Shepard, "Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples", 180-181.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 30. For a more detailed analysis of textiles as part of diplomacy see Shlosser, "Weaving a Precious Web", 45-52.

1279 For one such example, in more detail, see *DAI*, 13.24-38. Shepard, "Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples", 171-185, points to the desire of the northern peoples to possess objects which had a certain ideological value embedded in them. However, Shepard, "Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples", 180-181, on the other hand, mentions that the ideological value of the objects had no influence among the Pechenegs.

1280 *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen*, ed. Johannes Koder (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1991), 4.1-4.8, 8.1-8.11.

1281 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 271-272.

1282 The author of *DAI*, 13.24-30, indicates that the Khazars, Turks (Magyars), Rus, or other "Scythian" peoples often demanded from the Byzantines some imperial robes, diadems, or other garments which they believed were not man-made. See also Shepard, "Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples", 172-175.

with Bulgaria. The sources that are reporting on these contacts state how the Byzantine government frequently sent gifts to the Bulgarian rulers in order to achieve their political goals. In that context, Anastasius Bibliothecarius points that during the negotiations about the Christianization of Bulgaria, the Byzantines "...send him numerous presents...",[1283] while Theophanes Continuatus states in his *Chronicle* that "...due to generous honours and gifts...",[1284] the Bulgars accepted to become Christians. Regarding Simeon, the Byzantine sources report of the bestowment of "state" gifts, for example after the peace with Leon VI, or after the truce of 913 when "...Simeon and his children returned to their own land, gratified with gifts...",[1285] as well as in 923 when after the negotiations in Kosmidion were finished the emperor was „...showering Simeon with magnificent gifts...",[1286] such as the high-quality clothing called *skaramangion*.[1287] This Byzantine policy of gifting various luxury items and other valuables is clearly recorded in the sources reporting on the diplomatic relations with the Magyars[1288] and the Pechenegs,[1289] and also with the Rus. The author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* notes that after the concluded peace treaty in 907 "...the Emperor Leo [the Wise] honored the Russian envoys with gifts of gold, palls, and robes".[1290] Also, during the diplomatic visit of Olga of Rus to Constantinople, sources report that Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, in addition to gifting her and her household with silver coins, he, it seems, also bestowed as a gift a golden tray studded with precious stones.[1291] Časlav, the ruler of Serbia, was bestowed with "...rich gifts of the emperor of the Romans..." in order to rebuild, populate and organize his country.[1292] This diplomatic practice was skilfully used by Kalokyros, who was sent on a mission to Svyatoslav in Kiev, where he convinced the prince of Rus to attack Bulgaria "...by seducing him with gifts".[1293]

Although the "state" gifts undoubtedly had a financial side which was favorable for the recipient, as well as for the one who gifted them,[1294] it also had an ideological one. However, their true ideological value was achieved when these were publicly presented and paraded in the streets. This manner of presenting gifts, actually, activated and publicly communicated their true potential in diplomacy, which surpassed the personal

1283 *Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, Col. 20 B.
1284 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 342.8-15.
1285 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 195.
1286 Ibid, 213.
1287 Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 5.140.
1288 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.
1289 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 387.2-4; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 196.
1290 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 68.
1291 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 597-598.
1292 *DAI*, 32.141.
1293 *Leo the Deacon*, 128.
1294 Cutler "Gifts and Gift Exchange", 265-273.

meaning of the item or items established when one ruler bestowed the other. This public exhibition of the "gifts", besides the already observed progression from exchange value to use value, also gave them an added value, an ideological one i.e., that of displaying political power and wealth, as well as prestige. Depending on what was the reason behind the gifting and where this procession was made, during the reception in front of the ruler or in a public place in the form of a ceremony, the display of political power could refer to both the giver and the recipient of these gifts. As for the display of wealth, it was always directed primarily at the giver of the gifts, and only then to the recipient, and was often a matter of prestige. All these aspects of the "state" gifts in international relations were well known to medieval states, not only to the Byzantine Empire, but also others, especially those from the Islamic world.[1295]

Basically, "state" gifts were usually considered as good lubricants and softeners in the process of establishing diplomatic contacts, and were mainly sent in order to create a cordial atmosphere for the upcoming negotiations, which were related to certain political, economic or military matters, such as cessation of military aggression, conclusion of an alliance or a peace treaty, as well as negotiation of trade privileges. These could also be used as means of rebuke, or for an ideological purpose, a display of political power and wealth, as well as prestige, from both sides which actively participated in this ritualized diplomatic act.

Christianity as a means of diplomacy

From the sources which testify of the daily activities of the Byzantines it can be unequivocally concluded that they, or at least a large part of them, were deeply devoted Christians, religious and pious, who often took an active part in various religious debates and mostly tried to perform their everyday duties in full accordance with Christian norms. In fact, almost every aspect of the medieval Byzantine state and its society was strongly influenced by the Christian religion the beginnings of which can be traced back to the time when Emperor Constantine the Great seat on the throne of the Roman Empire. After becoming a sole ruler, he declared Christianity as an official state religion. In an attempt to harmonize the pagan concept of the origin of imperial power with the Christian teachings, and to establish certain cohabitation between these, a new political ideology was shaped and established, the foundations or beginnings of which can be traced back to the philosophy set forth by Eusebius of Caesarea.

[1295] Cutler, "Significant Gifts", 91-93.

The ideas that emerged from this political philosophy allowed the transformation of the ancient Roman Empire into a new Christian Empire centred in Constantinople without any major political disturbances. The official imperial ideology which emerged from this philosophy took the old pagan Roman concept of the god-emperor and turned it into an idea of divine origin of the reigning power. And just as there was one God in heaven, so according to this concept there was to be only one emperor on earth, an idea that was acceptable to the Christian population. In the eyes of the Byzantines, their Empire was perceived as an earthly replica of the Kingdom of Heaven, a state that was under the protection of God, whose ruler was personally chosen by the Almighty to rule the "chosen people". The Byzantine state saw itself as the sole Christian empire in the world, a universal instrument through which God's plan for salvation of mankind was carried out, whose destiny would last until his second coming. This political philosophy affected the imperial cult, its relationship with the Christian faith and its obligations toward the religion. Its sovereign, the Byzantine emperor, was ισαπόστολος - equal to the apostles, God's viceregent on earth, first among the sovereigns, guardian of the church and the one true Christian faith, protector of the "Chosen people" from the various enemies. All these ideological features which were assigned to the bearer of the imperial title had a single purpose - to exalt and emphasize in front of its own subjects, but also in front of the foreigners, the unique personal relationship that existed between the Byzantine emperor and God.[1296]

This ideological concept of the origin of imperial power was widespread among the Byzantines and was continuously repeated in court acclamations and rhetoric, in numerous orations, written documents, as well as through the daily church liturgies.[1297] This can also be noted from the activities of the Byzantine emperors, such as the numerous imperial ceremonies organized in the premises of the Great Palace, as well as the various other rites that the emperor performed, which either contained religious elements or due to their importance these were perceived as divine and actually emphasized the role which was assigned to him. According to the written sources, the Byzantine emperor took Christ as an example and mimicked his activities, going so far as to imitate him in a number of church ceremonies, evoking in some way his life on Earth.[1298]

[1296] Shepard, "Spreading the word", 230.; Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor", 1-2.; Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 11.; Bozhilov, *Vizantiiskiiat Sviat*, 117-118.

[1297] For more details see Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique*, 11-13.; Bozhilov, *Vizantiiskiiat Sviat*, 120-123.; Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor", 2.

[1298] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 638, reports that on Christmas celebration the emperor invited twelve guests to lunch following the example of the twelve apostles. During the Easter litany, the *magistroi* and *patrikioi* took the place of the apostles, while the emperor imitated Jesus Christ as much as he could. Also, on Holy Tuesday, he performed the Maundy ceremony. See also Oikonomides, *Les Listes*, 164.

Apart from caring about the welfare of Christians and their Church, one of the responsibilities which arose from this unique divine connection of the Byzantine emperor was the dissemination of the Christian religion. The emperor assumed the duty of establishing bishoprics in areas where there was no church organization at all and claimed the supreme right to ordain priests at the head of these newly formed centres. According to the established imperial propaganda he, and not some church person, was chosen by God to take care not only of the baptism of the population in the Roman world, but also to spread the Word throughout the world.[1299] This perception of the apostolic role of the emperor is observed not only in imperial biographies, for instance the life of Emperor Basileios I written by Konstantinos VII,[1300] but also in the life of the all-Slavic Christian saint Constantine the Philosopher.

The process of baptism and Christianization was, in essence, a very important political and ideological tool of the Byzantine emperor. According to the Byzantine belief, after a nonbeliever had become a Christian, he established, at the same moment, an abstract relationship with the Byzantine ruler, which was not only of a spiritual, but also of an ideological and political nature. As a result of the fact that the emperor perceived himself as God's representative on Earth, guardian of the church and supreme leader of the entire Christendom, according to the Byzantine ideological conviction, those who were baptized and accepted the spiritual authority of the Christian church, simultaneously accepted the authority of the emperor from Constantinople, becoming in a way his subjects. With this act, the Byzantine emperor not only showed to his subjects that he was carrying out the task which, according to his own belief, was given to him by God, but at the same time he disseminated the Byzantine culture and influence and imposed his supreme authority throughout the newly converted areas.[1301]

However, despite the ideologically established duty of the Byzantine emperor to disseminate the Christian faith, the sources do not confirm existence of organizations (state office or department), at least temporary ones, which had the task of organizing missions of this kind, or were in charge for training a staff specifically for that purpose. Baptism, it seems, was more of an *ad hoc* process without any major preparations. However, even if they would have shown more initiative and created opportunities for baptism, still, it did not mean that the Byzantines would have achieved greater success. Sources indicate that it was actually incredibly difficult to win new followers. If in a given region where there was no church organization a certain political structure existed with some

[1299] Shepard, "Spreading the Word", 230-231.
[1300] *Theophanes Continuatus*, 342.7-19.
[1301] The close connection between the church and the state in some way made the clergy bearers of Byzantine imperialism. See Obolensky, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 14, 17.; Shepard, "Spreading the word", 230-231.

level of cohesiveness, before launching any missionary work it was necessary to acquire permission from the authorities, but also an approval from the elite, for there are innumerable examples of resistance and revulsion, which sometimes manifested in the form of violent reaction and open revolt.[1302]

As for the centralized missionary activities, what should be noted is that the primary target was always the political top i.e., the leader of the people or the ruler of a foreign state. The reason why baptism constantly used the "top-down" approach[1303] i.e., from the leader and the elite to the ordinary population, should be sought in the military and political objectives which were to be achieved with this act, and in relation to those matters, the leader or the ruler were "the decision-makers", not their subjects. If there was a strong political interest in the Byzantine government, this process of Christianization [1304]was further observed and controlled, otherwise it was left to the church and there was a great possibility that some problem could arise and it would end in failure. In fact, sources indicate that it was incredibly difficult to win new followers of the Christian religion in practice. Evidence of that is the statement of Theophanes Continuatus, as well as the mission in Alania.[1305] That is why it was of greatest importance to ensure the cooperation of the people who had the power, status and influence in the communities before starting a mission, if the local population was to break away from the "old customs".[1306] As a result of this situation on the ground, the Byzantines directed all their efforts towards the baptism of members of the elite, thereby securing influence and a basis for further action. And at the moment when their consent would be obtained, the activities continued towards the rest of the population.

At first, the information from the sources confirms the established image of the Byzantine emperor as a zealous "apostle". However, from a chronological perspective, what can

[1302] An example of this attitude of the pagan elites towards Christianity is the attempt of the Hunnic leader Gordas who, after his conversion, tried to forcibly impose Christianity on his subjects. See Moravcsik, "Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars", 39. Another example is the attempt of Princess Olga to baptize Svyatoslav. According to the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 84, he told his mother about such attempts that "...how shall I alone accept another faith? My followers will laugh at that". That the other members of the nobility in a country could fiercely oppose the conversion can be seen in the revolt in Bulgaria which Boris managed to suppress. After the acceptance of Christianity, there was also a certain revolt among the Alans. That is why the leader and the elite were baptized first, and only then the rest of the population. See Shepard, "Spreading the word", 236.

[1303] Ševčenko, "Religious Missions", 15-16.

[1304] According to *Theophanis Continuati*, 20.14-20, the sermon delivered to the pagan Bulgars during the conclusion of a peace treaty in 816 was like "...casting pearls before swine". For this example, see also Marcello Garzaniti, „The Constantinopolitan Project of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission", in *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20th-30th November 2013*, ed. Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos (Thessaloniki, 2015), 52.

[1305] Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 321.

[1306] Shepard, "Spreading the word", 236.

be observed in this missionary activity of the emperor is certain inconsistency, a sort of discontinuity, followed by significant ups and downs throughout the centuries, indifference of the imperial government for missions of this kind towards certain regions and peoples, as well as the lack of evidence in the sources which indicate that this centralized missionary work was, in fact, the result of a long-term planning which was thought out and thoroughly worked out over a period which spanned through the reigns of several different emperors. It seems that the missions itself were more of an *ad hoc* process without any larger or long-term preparations which were carried out beforehand, since even the decision to apply it as a solution to a certain political problem was, apparently, made in a short notice.[1307]

In fact, the attitude of the Byzantine government towards this issue was probably the same as towards other spheres in society. It was assumed, as for example in trade, that it was better for foreigners to come to Constantinople than to take steps full of uncertainty in order to carry out the Word of God to the nations of the world. The large number of relics which were located, or were brought and kept in numerous churches, confirm the idea of the Byzantines that their city should be a centre of pilgrimage. They were of various kinds. Most often these were pieces of the Crucifixion Cross and remains of saints, clothing, such as the mantle of the Virgin kept at Blachernae or the Mandylion of Edessa, but also icons, the most important of which were those that, according to belief, were not drawn by human hands - *Acheiropoieta* and could perform miracles. The various medieval written sources which report of enormous number of people arriving in Constantinople to worship these relics only add to this fact.[1308]

Although the Byzantines achieved great political benefit from the dissemination of the Christian faith because of the ideological implications which arose from this act, nevertheless, the sources report that as a result of the difficult situation in which their state found itself from the middle of the 7th until the middle of the 9th century, when it fought ferociously for its own survival, Christianization which was carried out by the Byzantine government was not aimed at whole states and peoples, but mostly at individuals who had political and military power important to imperial interests, for instance the Bulgarian ruler Kubrat, or communities which were located on its borders.[1309] There is no evidence in this period of a sustained and uninterrupted effort by the Byzantine Empire

[1307] Patriarch Photios indicates that this is so, who, before the Bulgars accepted Christianity, declared that their baptism was impossible. See Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 318.

[1308] For more details about the role of relics see Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 116-119. For the robe of the Blessed Virgin, see Averil Cameron, "The Virgins Robe: An Episode in the History of Early Seventh-Century Constantinople", *Byzantion* 49 (1979): 42-48.; About the relics related to the cult of the Virgin see Norman H. Baynes, "The Supernatural defenders of Constantinople", in *Byzantine Studies and other Essays* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1955), 257-258.

[1309] For the large number of religious missions that the Byzantine Empire undertook during the 6th century see Gjalevski, "Diplomatskite aspekti", 70.; Ivanov, "Religious missions", 307-312.

to convert entire nations or tribes. Most of the time, the end goal of the Byzantine's religious policy was to maintain the prestige of the Christian faith, and thus of the emperor, and the need to establish greater security on its own borders. The attempt of Leon V to impose Christianity to the Bulgarian envoys during signing of the peace treaty, or baptism of the Slavs in the Balkan regions, only confirm this tendency of the Byzantine government, as well as the difficulties which the priests faced when carrying out their missionary activity.[1310] This drastic decline in the state's interest in this activity, probably as a result of internal problems and other priorities of the Byzantine government, or because there was no political need for such types of missions, left room in this intervening period for local and personal baptismal initiatives undertaken by priests or wandering monks, or by merchants, mercenaries, captives and political refugees. However, these activities remained unnoticed because they were overshadowed by large centralized enterprises.[1311]

Already in the middle of the 9th century, the sources report about the Byzantine government's interest in missionary activities among the surrounding nations and tribes, as well as about an intensified activity of the patriarchate of Constantinople. These were mostly directed towards the Balkans and the regions around the Black Sea. The reason for this is that in the west the population was already baptized and fell under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the pope of Rome, while beyond the eastern border there was Islam, a religion with the same zeal as Christianity. This intensified missionary activity among the nonbelievers had already begun when Michael III was on the Byzantine throne, although the sources, especially Konstantinos VII, assign all of these missionary activities to his grandfather Basileios I.[1312] Unlike the 6th century, both the amount and the territorial scope of the centralized missions during this period are somewhat smaller. Thus, the missionary activities included Khazaria,[1313] where the bishopric of Gothia was established,[1314] Kievan Rus[1315] and Moravia.[1316] Significant efforts

[1310] Shepard, "Spreading the word", 232, 235.

[1311] Such local and personal initiatives have been witnessed in the Balkans, in the regions around the city of Thessalonica and on the territory of medieval Macedonia, as well as in the area of Cherson. For Thessalonica and Macedonia, see *Theophylacti*, Col.189.C-D, 192.A. For Cherson Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 313. For Central Europe Lubomir Havlik, "Constantine and Methodius in Moravia", *Sbornik Praci Filosoficke Faculty Brnēnskē University* C11 (1964): 29, n.9. For the Pontic steppe and the Caspian Sea, see Moravcsik, "Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars", 34, 39-41.

[1312] Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 316.; Shepard, "Spreading the Word", 230. According to Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 314, the role that the scholars had assigned to Patriarch Photios (858-867, 877-886) regarding the missionary activities of the 9th century is exaggerated.

[1313] *Panonski legendi*, 36-51.

[1314] More about the bishopric of Gothia see Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 314-315. For the apostolic activity of the archbishop of Cherson in Khazaria see also Shepard, "Spreading the Word", 242.

[1315] Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 183-184.; Shepard, "Spreading the Word", 232-233.; Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 320.

[1316] For Moravia see Svetlina Nikolova, "The Moravian Mission – A Successful and an Unsuccessful Result of

to disseminate Christianity have also been made in the Balkans. During this period, the Slavs from the Macedonian Sklaviniai who were under indirect rule of the Byzantine Empire were baptized, as well as the Slavic tribes in the Peloponnese who were already subjects of the emperor. The result of this activity was the establishment of bishoprics, such as *Drougobitia* and *Smolain*.[1317] A mission was sent among the Bulgars, as well as among the Serbs. During this second missionary period, the Byzantine government sent priests to the Arabs whose purpose was to respond to the criticism of the Muslims and to maintain the ideological position of the Byzantine sovereign as a supreme guardian of the Christians. In the 10th century, sources testify of missionary work beyond the Black Sea in Alania[1318] and the land of Kievan Rus,[1319] but also in Pannonia amongst the Magyars, where a bishopric of Turkey was established and was active until the middle of the 11th century. This intensified missionary activity was, in fact, a result of the strengthening of the Byzantine Empire, of its struggle for supremacy with the Roman papacy, but also of the rivalry with Islam, as well as the need to maintain the reputation of the emperor as an extremely pious and wise ruler. The experience which the Byzantine government gained in the Balkans with the dissemination of Christianity among the subjugated Slavs in the Peloponnese and on the eastern border also played an important role, where immediately after the Byzantine conquest of a certain region, a mass baptism of Muslims, Paulicians and Monophysites was carried out.[1320]

If one follows the official narrative reports about the "apostolic" activity of some of the Byzantine emperors, such as Basileios I, it is expected that these were missions of a larger scale, which were planned in detail before they even began.[1321] However, there is

the Activity of sts. Cyril and Methodius", in *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20th-30th November 2013*, ed. Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos (Thessaloniki, 2015), 58-74.; Vladimír Vavřínek, "Cyril and Methodius. Was there a Byzantine Missionary Program for the Slavs?", in *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20th-30th November 2013*, ed. Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos (Thessaloniki, 2015), 18-29. See also Dvornik, "The Significance", 195-211, as well Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 137-147.; Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 316-318, and Shepard, "Spreading the Word", 238-239.

[1317] For the Byzantine diplomatic goal behind these activities, see Gjalevski, "Sprečuvajki ja bugarskata ekspanzija", 41-55. For the bishoprics of *Drougobitia, Smolain* and *Velikia* in *FGHB* Tomus IV, 160-161.

[1318] Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 320-322.

[1319] Demetrios J. Constantelos, "The Conversion of Russia to Christianity in the Light of Greek Missionary Activity Among the Slavs", *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 33, no.4 (1988): 363-385.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 188-196.; Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 325-327.

[1320] About the baptism of the Slavs from the Peloponnese in *DAI*, 49.50-54.

[1321] For the "apostolic" activity of Basileios I, see *Vita Basilii Imperatoris*, 95.1-21. According to the Emperor Leon VI in his *Taktika*, XVIII.453-457, he "...persuaded these [Slavic] peoples to abandon their ancient ways and, having made them Greek, subjected them to rulers according to the Roman model, and having graced

a large discrepancy between the rhetoric presented in the written sources and the situation on the ground. It is noted that they were not undertaken from the sincere desire of the Byzantines to spread the Christian teachings to all the peoples of the world, but as a kind of reaction to certain political or military events which had an impact on the position of the Byzantine Empire on international level; if there was a clear and unequivocal danger to the security of the state as a result of certain political actions, disturbances or military developments near its borders; if in a certain region there was an attempt of encroachment from other proselytizing religions (Islam and Judaism); or if there was a sincere willingness, in the form of a direct invitation sent to the emperor, by the pagan rulers themselves to accept Christianity.[1322]

So, the conversion which was conducted among the Macedonian Slavs in the middle of the 9th century was as a result of the need to pacify the Slavs and gain them as allies in order to secure the border in the Balkans from the increasingly aggressive military appetites of Bulgaria. The mission to the Khazars, where Constantine the Philosopher was sent, was at the invitation of their *khan* who had a goal to establish a state religion. The two brothers, Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, were sent to Moravia after the emperor had also received an official request from its ruler. At the same time, as a reaction to the political turmoil in Central Europe and the rapprochement with the Eastern Frankish kingdom, a mission was sent to the Bulgars only after their ruler had given prior consent.[1323] The mission to the Serbian principalities was a response to the military danger, both from the Bulgars and Arabs, which was stalking the Byzantine dominions in the Adriatic Sea, as well as from the intensified attempts of the Roman Church and the Frankish kingdom to achieve greater influence in this area. The Rus became focus of missionary activity immediately after their attack on Constantinople and its suburbs. And the second attempt, which ended with the baptism of Princess Olga, was undertaken after several Rus raiding campaigns in the Byzantine Empire. It was the same with the Magyars. The centralized missionary activity witnessed in the sources from the middle of the 10th century was conducted only after their raiding incursions into Byzantine territory became more frequent. The final acceptance of Christianity by the Rus at the end of the same century was, in fact, a political agreement between the rulers of the two states, the Kievan Rus and the Byzantine Empire. From the previously stated, if the missions initiated by the church are omitted i.e., by its priests, according to the methods and means which were undertaken and implemented on the ground, the missions of the Byzantine

them with baptism, he liberated them from slavery to their own rulers and trained them to take part in warfare against those nations warring against the Romans".

[1322] Gjalevski, "Diplomatskite aspekti", 73-75.

[1323] Moravcsik, "Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars", 38.; Shepard, "Spreading the Word", 232.

government can be divided[1324] into such where Christianization was: supported by military force, through diplomatic measures and after the call from foreign rulers or leaders. However, it is necessary to note that such a categorization is not fixed, since the sources report of an implementation in more than one way of influence in the Byzantine missions in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe, which will be elaborated in more detail.

In regards to Bulgaria, probably well acquainted with the existing and, it seems, generally accepted medieval ideology of a hierarchical order of states, Boris saw that the only way through which he could enter the European community of states, which would simultaneously gain not only international recognition of the state but also legitimacy of his authority, was through the acceptance of the unifying aspect - the Christian faith.[1325] Apart from external factors, there were also several important internal factors. One of these was the intolerance which existed between the pagan and the increasingly strong Christian element. The difference in the traditional pagan beliefs between Bulgars and Slavs should also be noted, which did not allow for a complete unification of these two largest groups in the Bulgarian state. However, most important of all was the need of the Bulgarian rulers to establish a stable centralized government on a firm universal basis which would be acceptable to the various indigenous peoples who lived in Bulgaria. The Christian religion had one such unifying character.[1326] With the act of baptism and the acceptance of Christianity, the pagan rulers in the Middle Ages received not only recognition of their states, but also a confirmation of the legitimacy of their reign. And, in accordance with this political practice, the rulers who accepted Christianity, in fact, at the same time gave their consent to accept the supreme authority of the church and the first among all the rulers in Christendom, the emperor in Constantinople.

In fact, from the Byzantine point of view, the Christianization of Bulgaria was done more out of necessity than due to a long-term planning. The end was to pacify this aggressive neighbour and to incorporate it into the oecumene, which would then lead to imposition of the supreme authority of the Byzantine emperor. Although the sources indicate that in the past the Byzantines tried at every opportune moment to baptize some of the Bulgar nobles, they also report that this intention was repeatedly thwarted. The success of the Byzantine diplomacy during the 860s in imposing Christianity on the Bulgars was basically a result of several different factors. A few years before the official process of baptism had begun, sources report that the imperial government in

[1324] Such a division was made by Ševčenko, "Religious Missions", 12-15, and he also includes the missions initiated by the church.

[1325] Angelov, *Bălgarskata Srednovekovna diplomaciia*, 88-89.

[1326] For the reasons why Boris accepted Christianity, see Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 35-42.; Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 127, 144.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 94-95.

Constantinople was aware of Bulgaria's political rapprochement with the Eastern Frankish kingdom and the intention of the Bulgar ruler to accept Christianity as official religion. Inclination of the Bulgarian state to the west meant a serious blow for the imperial prestige and the self-proclaimed role of the Byzantine emperor as "apostle" and guardian of Christians, but what is even more significant, in the segment of medieval *realpolitik*, it would allow penetration of Western political and religious influence in the Balkans. This Frankish-Bulgarian rapprochement would not only further threaten the security of Constantinople, but at the same time would undermine the position of the Byzantine emperor in international relations. On the other hand, Boris' open advocacy for accepting Christianity as state religion left an opportunity for the Byzantine Empire to achieve its own interests and incorporate Bulgaria into its political and cultural orbit. The events that followed in 863-864 confirm this fact. Although afterwards the ruler of Bulgaria temporarily leaned towards Rome, the flexibility of the Byzantine diplomacy and the concessions offered fixed Bulgaria's position in the "commonwealth", a world of shared cultural and religious values in which the emperor in Constantinople was supreme ruler, despite the long-standing conflict which arose during the reign of Simeon. They also indicate something else. That in the middle of the 9th century, the ruling elite of the pagan countries also had an interest in joining the informal union of the Christian "civilized" states. Boris' initiative is evidence enough of this tendency. The reason for that was the political benefit that these rulers received internationally. By accepting Christianity as official religion, they actually gained international legitimization of their own government and increased authority, recognition of their state from all important European power centres, as well as political rights in diplomatic relations with other Christian rulers.

The acceptance of Christianity as state religion meant that now Bulgaria was subject to the established informal union of civilized states where, according to the Byzantine ideology, the emperor in Constantinople was a supreme leader, the only legal guardian of Christendom. This ideological subjugation was emphasized even more clearly by the Byzantine government if the people or the state received the Christian religion from the patriarchate of Constantinople. According to the Byzantine political philosophy the symbol of this submission was, in fact, the personal spiritual relationship between the ruler of the newly converted people and the emperor, which was established during the process of baptism.[1327] In the case of Bulgaria, its place in the informal union was determined by Boris's acceptance of the name Michael, making him, in accordance with Byzantine political ideology, the spiritual child of Emperor Michael III.[1328] The central point

[1327] Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 84-85.; Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 176.

[1328] According to *The Book of Ceremonies*, 681-682, in the beginning, the Byzantine government named the

of this philosophy was the theory that just as the son or grandson should listen to, respect and obey the father i.e., the grandfather, thus Bulgaria and its ruler should now submit to the Byzantine Empire and accept the supreme authority of the emperor.[1329] However, in order for this imagined Byzantine ideological supremacy to be effective, it had to be accepted by the Bulgarian subjects themselves. Therefore, immediately after the baptism of Boris and some of his most prominent associates, the Byzantine Empire started a process of Christianization among the rest of the population, since, as Pope Nicholas I himself notes in his letter to Hincmar, the best and most efficient way to expand his own political and cultural influence throughout the Bulgarian lands was exactly through this process.

The Byzantines set themselves most zealously in the execution of this whole undertaking. They saw the Bulgarian state as their own missionary and cultural domain, whose ruler and population should be directed towards accepting the established order in the Christian world, but seen through the prism of Byzantine political propaganda. Therefore, the affirmation of the Christian civilizational and cultural values, and thus of the Byzantine ideology, was completely left to the church of Constantinople and its Patriarch Photios as one of the most educated people, an expert of Christian dogma.[1330] Immediately after the baptism of the *archon*[1331] Boris, he sent a letter to the Bulgarian ruler entitled "Letter of the holy Patriarch Photios to the archon of the Bulgarians Michael - what are the duties of an archon", filled with rhetoric, various references and directions in Christian philosophy, church dogma and history.[1332] The language and style in which

Bulgarian ruler as spiritual grandson of the emperor, so that later he became his spiritual son. See also Angelov, *Bălgarskata Srednovekovna diplomaciia*, 90.

[1329] One such example is presented in *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*, tr. Robert H. Charles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1916), 138, in relation to the Lazi.

[1330] Although it was Photios who determined the details and apparently made some plan as to how the mission of Christianization was to be carried out, it was, in my opinion, carried out by previous order from some council, probably similar to that attested in On Strategy, 43.39-42, and it seems, personally led by the Byzantine emperor. I do not agree with Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, 81-83, 87, that Photios independently decided whether and what kind of church organization would be formed in the country that was the target of a missionary work, or that, on the other hand, Byzantine diplomatic initiatives of this kind (centralized missions of baptism) arose as a result of his independent activities, without the Byzantine emperor being acquainted with them. Such independent steps were known to be perceived as defiance to the authority of the emperor, a kind of act of betrayal and renegading, which would then lead to his removal from the patriarchal throne, as it had happened. The mission to the Bulgars, like all the others that were undertaken while he was patriarch, were centralized missions that could be initiated only by order from the Byzantine emperor, and represented a kind of reaction to some previous external political or military stimulus i.e., out of some necessity, and then only thought and carried out by the Church of Constantinople and its patriarch.

[1331] After his baptism, in Byzantine sources, such as *The Book of Ceremonies*, 690, he is named an *archon*.

[1332] About the letter of Patriarch Photios see *FGHB* Tomus IV, 59-99. For a detailed analysis of the letter, see Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, 112-152. Also, Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 71-84.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 85-86. According to Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 169, Photius' letter was a response to a direct request from Boris for an independent church that would be under his direct control.

the text itself was written indicates that Photios saw himself as a spiritual teacher of the Bulgarian ruler, who was to be taught and instructed not only in Christian teachings, but also in the duties he had as a Christian sovereign. This is especially noticeable when the patriarch declares that "...I want to be by your side and supervise your actions, so that when I see the good deeds I rejoice and celebrate even more; if something unreasonable happens, I can easily access it and correct it immediately".[1333] Although he avoids mentioning it directly in a diplomatic way, this excerpt from the text nevertheless unequivocally testifies that the letter, in addition to the religious, also had the purpose of exerting political influence on Boris and indicating to him that he should be obedient to the church that baptized him, and thus to the will of its earthly guardian, the Byzantine emperor.

Immediately after, priests carrying theological books, as well as Christian and civil codes were sent through the Bulgarian regions, which began zealously to spread the Christian faith and establish a church organization in its territory. A Byzantine bishop, subordinate to the patriarch of Constantinople, was immediately appointed at the head of the newly formed Bulgarian church. Through the wholehearted help of the Bulgarian government and army, group baptisms of its pagan subjects were undertaken. A large number of churches were built in which services and other sermons began to be performed in the medieval Hellenic language (romaika), incomprehensible to the local population.[1334] Although at first glance these missionary activities in Bulgaria were no different from the similar endeavours conducted in the Balkans and Moravia, hidden under the facade of Christianization another process also began to take place, the existence of which is clearly visible in the letter with the answers of Pope Nicholas I to the questions of Boris, sent after the change of the Bulgarian foreign policy and its orientation towards Rome in 866.[1335] The letter of the Roman Pope represents significant evidence not only of the methods and principles of action of the Byzantine clergy in the baptism of the Bulgarians, but also of their agenda. This source also reports on the position which the Byzantine government had in relation to the Bulgarian state. What is only superficially indicated in the letter of the patriarch Photios, can be very clearly observed in the correspondence of the pope of Rome with the Bulgarian ruler. Bulgaria was seen as an integral part of the Byzantine political and cultural sphere without any possibility for ecclesiastical independence, the ultimate goal of which was its total subjugation under the authority of the emperor in Constantinople.

[1333] *FGHB* Tomus IV, 78.

[1334] About the construction of ecclesiastical buildings i.e., churches and the establishing of bishoprics throughout the territory of the Bulgarian state by Boris, see *Theophylacti*, 189.B, 200.C-D, 205.B.

[1335] About Pope Nicholas I's answers to Boris's questions see *FLHB* Tomus II, 65-125. See also, Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 87-104.; Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 178-179.

From the answers of the Pope, it can be concluded that the subjugation of the Bulgarians and their full integration into the Byzantine *oecumene* had to be carried out not with the help of war and sword, but through the process of baptism and acceptance of Byzantine culture, the implementation of which was left to the missionaries themselves. For this purpose, in parallel with the baptism of population and imposition of Orthodox rites, as well as dissemination of Byzantine Christian and civil laws, the priests started to aggressively impose other customs on the Bulgarian subjects, while totally rejecting the already existing ones. These were not only from the religious sphere, but also included other segments of the daily life of the Bulgarians. The imposition of the Byzantine culture on the Bulgarian society went as far as telling the population what clothes they should wear.[1336] This process probably took place during, or immediately after, the sermons in the churches or throughout the daily communication which the priests had not only with the local population but also with the elite. Another method through which the Byzantine ideology was disseminate among the population were the church sermons, more precisely through the singing of liturgical diptych contents during the *Eucharist*.[1337] According to the established Orthodox canons which originate from the 5th century, the names of all church leaders with whom the local church was communicating, or to which it was subordinated, were written down according to their importance and hierarchy in the ecclesiastical world. In the case of the Bulgarian church, it fell under the jurisdiction of the patriarch in Constantinople. In accordance with the imperial ideology, the name of the Byzantine emperor who was ruling at the time was also written in the liturgical diptych.[1338] Since the Bulgarian church was apparently no exception, his name was probably also included in these diptychs and pronounced during liturgies. In fact, this procedure of glorifying and thanking the patriarch of Constantinople during the religious service in the Bulgarian churches, as well as the praying for the well-being of its guardian - the emperor, according to the medieval political concepts of subordination of one ruler under the sceptre of another ruler in accordance with the established hierarchical system of states, was a firm ideological evidence that Bulgaria accepted the supreme authority of the Byzantine Empire and subdued to its sovereign.

All these developments throughout Bulgaria only further increased the strong dissatisfaction which started to appear among the Bulgarian elite immediately after the acceptance of Christianity and the loss of their privileged status in society. Dissatisfied from

1336 *FLHB* Tomus II, 103. See also Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 91.; Shepard, "Slavs and Bulgars", 241.; Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, 171.

1337 For the liturgical diptych and the diptych in general, see *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium Vol. 3*, 638.

1338 As God's representative on earth and guardian of the church, he claimed the right to have his name mentioned in all the churches in Christendom. See Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor", 4.

his, in their view, evident pro-Byzantine policy, they rose up in rebellion against Boris, which was successfully, but bloodily suppressed by him and his close supporters.[1339] This event clearly shows the position of the Byzantine church officials which were sent to Bulgaria. The intolerance demonstrated by the priests towards the participants if this rebellion and the great influence they apparently had on the Bulgarian knyaz's decision to execute them,[1340] points to the fact that these church officials considered themselves representatives of the patriarch of Constantinople rather than of the Bulgarian Church, a kind of imperial agents whose loyalty was ultimately toward its guardian, the Byzantine emperor.

This aggressive attitude of the Byzantine clergy and the intransigent policy of the emperor had led Bulgaria to lean towards the Roman papacy. In the period which followed, the Byzantines tried with the help of all the means that they had at their disposal to restore the relations with the Bulgarian *knyaz* to their previous positions. Even Photios became involved in this process by becoming a diplomat through his written correspondence. In a letter he informs the Eastern patriarchs that at first the Bulgarians, a barbarous people who "...renounced their ancestral demons and orgies..." were soon apostatized from the true and pure dogmas and the immaculate Christian faith by people who "... have sprung from the darkness [of the West]". The rest of Photios' letter represents a kind of an account of all the false teachings and doctrines which, according to his conviction, the Latins imposed on the Bulgarians. In fact, he tried with the help of his knowledge of Christian dogmas and teachings, pointing out through the presented facts the righteousness of his struggle, to win over the heads of the Eastern patriarchates. The ultimate goal of Photios was, together with the representatives of the Eastern patriarchs, to condemn the dogmatic errors of the Latins at a future church council which was to be held in Constantinople during the next couple years and to force the Bulgarian church and its ruler to return to Orthodoxy, recognizing the spiritual authority of the patriarch in Constantinople.[1341]

The local council which was held in Constantinople during 869-870 was a complete success for the Byzantine government. Although it was decided that the Bulgarian church would not be under the direct administration of the patriarch in Constantinople,

[1339] For more details about the revolt of the Bolyars see Zlatarski, *Istoriia*, 53-58. Also, Bozhilov i Giuzelev, *Istoriia*, 175-176.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 88.; Shepard, "Slavs and Bulgars", 241. That the rebellion was primarily a result of the loss of privileges which the boyars had, see Daniel Ziemann, "Between Authoritarianism and Consensus: Domination and the Role of Nobility in the First Bulgarian Realm (7th-late 9th Century)", *Bulgaria Medievalis* 2 (2011): 393.

[1340] Pope Nicholas I, *FLHB* Tomus II, 112-113, advised Boris that "...those people, who rose up for the Christian faith, to kill you, wished to do penance, and those priests who came among you did not want to accept it...if, as you assert, they willingly wish to repent, they should not be hindered but should submit to all the degrees of penance which the bishop or presbyter, ordained by him, shall devise".

[1341] See *Photii Constantinopolitani Patriarchae*, Col.721-741. For the political aspects of Photios' correspondence with the Eastern Patriarchs see Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, 231-240.

nevertheless, through the acceptance of Christianity from this centre, the Bulgarian ruler, in fact, accepted the historical facts presented at the last assembly of this church council, recognizing as legitimate the right of ecclesiastical jurisdiction which the Byzantine Empire had laid on the Bulgarian territories. This actually meant that Boris-Michael arbitrarily agreed that the archbishopric would be subordinated to the patriarchate of Constantinople, and through the procedure of approval of the Bulgarian head of the church from the hand of the "God's representative on earth", also to its guardian, the Byzantine emperor.[1342]

At the same time, the Byzantine government seems to have conducted the first of several centralized missionary activities among the Rus. Through the process of Christianization, the Byzantines wanted not only to pacify this people, whose attack of 860 left deep traces in their memory, but at the same time to gain a powerful ally on their side. The reason for the use of religion by the Byzantines was identical as in the case of other nations. According to the Byzantine political ideology, through acceptance of Christianity, the Rus, despite the *de facto* independence of their ruler, would be included in the Byzantine "hierarchy of states", and according to the existing political ideology would be formally treated as subjects of the emperor. That is why in his letter Patriarch Photios refers to this northern people as a friend (πρόξενοι) and subject (υπήκοοι).[1343] However, these established religious and political ties were not as firm as Patriarch Photios wanted to portray them, and the mission which was sent among the Rus seems to have been forcibly terminated, without achieving any lasting results.[1344]

After several short and unsuccessful missions during the 860s and 870s, the Byzantines began to disseminate the Christian faith among the Rus on an individual basis, as well as by baptizing prominent Rus figures who came to Constantinople, and who had significant power and influence in their society.[1345] This situation changed towards the end of the 10th century in favour of the Byzantine Empire, and the reasons behind this change are presented in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*. According to its author, before the Rus were baptized by the priests sent from the patriarchate of Constantinople, Prince Vladimir in-

[1342] This consent actually represented, according to Jonathan Shepard, "Byzantium's Overlapping Circles", *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies Vol. I*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 20, a kind of confirmation that the Byzantines had previously ruled the Bulgarian territory, but that paganism managed to forcibly remove them from there.

[1343] *Photii Patriarchae*, 50.

[1344] The Byzantine mission was probably interrupted by internal disturbances which, although dated to 862 according to *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 59-60, arose in Kievan Rus in the late 860s. See also Shepard, "The Viking Rus and Byzantium", 498.

[1345] These individuals would further help disseminate Christianity among the rest of the population. The baptism of Princess Olga is just one such example witnessed in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 82-83.

quired about the advantages of each of the monotheistic religions, deciding in the end to accept Christianity.[1346] He conveys the admiration of the Rus envoys that were sent to the Byzantine capital. When they returned home, according to the author, they gave the following report: "...we went to Greece, and the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty".[1347] The readiness of the prince of Rus to abandon the "old customs" was an exceptional opportunity for the Byzantine government to impose Christianity and subordinate him ideologically to the authority of the emperor through inclusion of his country within the informal union of the "hierarchy of states". The marriage with Anna the "porphyrogennita", the sister of Basileios II, agreed upon and finally concluded with Vladimir, was actually a Rus' exploitation of the difficult situation in which this emperor found himself during the protracted civil war, as well as evidence of the prince of Rus' desire by to establish a closer political relationship with the Byzantine Empire as a result of the international prestige he would gain from his marriage with a Byzantine princess. Immediately after Vladimir was baptized, a mission in Kiev followed in which numerous bishops and metropolitans were sent.[1348]

Regarding the dissemination of Christianity among the Croats and Serbs in the Balkan Peninsula, despite the fact that *De Administrando Imperio* and Theophanes Continuatus report that the Christianisation of the Slavic tribes was carried out in the time of Emperor Basileios I, nevertheless, the information in Byzantine and Western sources, as well as the archaeological findings,[1349] report that the process of accepting the Christian religion among this Slavic population began several decades before his accession to the Byzantine throne. They point to the fact that the Christianisation of Croatia (or only the Croatian ruling elite) was carried out no later than 852, in the time of Michael III,[1350] and its beginnings should be sought in the 8th century. In regards to Serbia, the only explanation behind the appearance of Christian names among the Serbian ruling elite in the middle of the 9th century, for example the names given to some of the sons of Mutimir and Gojnik, the co-rulers of Serbia,[1351] is that this process of Christianization and baptism had most probably begun much earlier than the Byzantine sources report. Hence, one cannot speak that any kind of

1346 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 96-119. Also, Ivanov, "Religious missions", 325-326.

1347 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 111.

1348 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 113-119, gives a picture of the process of Christianization of the Kievan Rus. See also Shepard, "Spreading the word", 231.

1349 For the archaeological finds, see Komatina, *Crkvena politika*, 273, 282.

1350 Komatina, *Crkvena politika*, 273, indicates that Trpimir, the ruler of Croatia, had a son named Petar.

1351 About the Christian names of the sons of the Serbian co-rulers in *DAI*, 32.39-53, 32.61.

centralized missionary activity was conducted amongst the Croats and Serbs by Basileios I, the main assignment of which was to baptize their rulers, as well as their population.

In relation to the Magyars, the reasons for their Christianization were almost identical to those for the Bulgarians and the Rus: pacification and cessation of their raids in the Balkans, disseminating Byzantine influence in Central Europe and inclusion of the kingdom of Hungary in the Byzantine cultural sphere, thus obtaining a military ally in the political conflict that the Byzantine Empire had with the German sovereign Otto I. Due to the internal structure of the Magyars which consisted of clans with widely distributed – but not equal – political power between them, the Byzantine government had the opportunity to carry out the process of Christianization and establishment of a church not through one man, their ruler, but through several persons, local powerful dignitaries or clan leaders, some of whom were also highly sympathetic to the Byzantine Empire.[1352]

The missionary activity towards the Magyars started in Constantinople, where the Byzantines welcomed *karchas* Bulcsu with the greatest honours and baptized him. However, as a result of Bulcsu's hostile behaviour which continued after he visited the Byzantine capital, the Byzantines decided that a stronger relationship with the Magyars should be establish through *Gylas*, another influential Magyar leader, in order to prevent future military aggression directed towards the Empire. For this purpose, they used the only means that had already proven successful in pacifying hostile states and nations on a longer term - the dissemination of the Christian faith. Although the first attempts to disseminate Christianity among the Magyar leaders appear to have been made decades earlier by the Byzantine envoy and priest Gabriel,[1353] in the middle of the 10th century it was done on a much more organized level. According to Skylitzes, after he was baptized, *Gylas* took back with him a "...monk with a reputation for piety named Hierotheos who had been ordained bishop of Turkey by Theophylact. When he got there, he converted many from the barbaric fallacy to Christianity".[1354] The activity of this new church in the Pannonian plain was wholeheartedly supported by *Gylas*, who "...remained faithful to Christianity; he made no inroad against the Romans nor did he leave Christian prisoners untended. He ransomed them, took care of their needs and set them free".[1355] The baptism of this Magyar leader, his adherence to the new faith and the new church, had great

[1352] Despite these Byzantine efforts, the Magyars were finally baptized by the Western Church towards the end of the 10th century.

[1353] *DAI*, 8.25-27. Also, Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 155.

[1354] About the first bishop of "Turkey" in more detail in Skylitzes, Synopsis, 231. For the dissemination of Christianity and the establishment of the Magyar bishopric see Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 107.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 155-156.; Ivanov, "Religious missions", 322.; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 40-41.

[1355] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.

consequences for this state. Although this bishopric of "Turkey" existed until the middle of the 11th century,[1356] it was not recorded in any of the official lists. Its title by territory rather than by city or a seat suggests the possibility that it was one of those bishoprics organized by the Byzantine Empire to baptize the "barbarian territories", whose activity according to the source material was most pronounced in the southern Magyar areas located around the rivers Danube and Tisza, and in Transylvania.[1357] It can be assumed that the mission of this bishopric was the dissemination of the Christian faith, as well as of Byzantine culture, throughout these regions, including the cult of the emperor as guardian of all Christians, which would have attracted the Magyars into the Byzantine sphere, and whose influence would then allow for a gradual identification of their interests with the ones of the Byzantines.

The sources do not contain information regarding the reason why the Magyars during the second half of the 10th century so easily broke the military alliance concluded with the enemies of the Byzantine Empire and went over to the side of the Byzantines. The usual diplomatic procedures by sending a skilful and experienced envoy who brought with him gold and precious gifts during negotiations would probably not have achieved such exceptional success with the Magyars, for Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos testifies that the Magyar leaders had no problem rejecting a proposal from a Byzantine envoy if it did not suit their interests. Apparently, there was some additional factor beside the Byzantine envoy, unnamed in the source material, which influenced the Magyar leaders and convinced them that it would be of great benefit to them to establish peaceful and friendly relations with the Byzantine Empire. As a result of the ideological connection between the church and the Byzantine emperor, it is not impossible that the bishopric of "Turkey" actively participated in the negotiation process, which until the acceptance of Christianity as state religion during the reign of King Stephen I, the son of Geza, probably had a significant influence in Magyar society. This is indicated by the sources and material findings. Judging by the remains, the churches built during this period throughout Pannonia, indicate the use of a Byzantine architectural style. According to Hungarian legends, the king of Hungary was given permission to build a church in Constantinople. Furthermore, a large number of members of the ruling family at the time of Stephen I had Orthodox Christian names and almost all could speak medieval (romaika) Hellenic

[1356] Ivanov, "Religious missions", 322.

[1357] For its role, see Ádám Bollók, "Byzantine missions among the Magyars during the later 10th Century?", in *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe. Archaeological and Historical Evidence*, eds. M. Salamon, M. Wołoszyn et al., U ŹRÓDEŁ EUROPY ŚRODKOWO-WSCHOIDNEJ/FRÜHZEIT OSTMITTELEUROPAS 1,2 (Kraków-Leipzig-Rzeszów-Warszawa, 2012), 131-144.; Gyula Moravcsik, "The Role of the Byzantine Church in the Medieval Hungary", *The American Slavic and East European Revie*w 6, no.3-4 (1947), 134-151. See also Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 322-323.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 155-157.

language. Also, one should not forget the union between Ajtony and Emperor Basileios II, as well as his baptism during the siege of Vidin in the beginning of the 11th century, after which he built a monastery on his territory according to the Byzantine style.[1358] These deep friendly ecclesiastical and cultural ties which existed or were re-established between the Byzantine Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary continued to grow and develop throughout the 11th century.

Unlike the Rus and the Magyars, the Pechenegs did not belong to the group of peoples who, from the middle of the 9th until the beginning of the 11th century, accepted Christianity of their own free will and out of political interest. The Pechenegs were not seduced and fascinated by the Christian faith. Although it is hard to believe that during their regular annual visits to the Pecheneg country the Byzantine envoys did not bring missionaries with them, there is no evidence that during the 10th century the Byzantine Empire tried to baptize this steppe people. Although there is no preserved data in the source material, the absence of the same does not mean that the Byzantine Empire did not previously try to take the same steps as towards other nations and tribes i.e., to win over one of their tribal leaders to the Christian faith. The lack of a centralized structure in their society, their beliefs and customs, as well as the pastoral way of life, were probably the reasons why this nomadic tribe could not find a common ground with a religion that required fixed sanctuaries, but also sedentary living in one place for a longer period.[1359] They are described and named by the German missionary St. Bruno of Querfurt, who lived with the Pechenegs at the beginning of the 11th century for five whole months, as "ominum paganorum crudelissimi", cruel and simple pagans.[1360] In fact, the written sources report that the first successful attempts to baptize a Pecheneg tribal leader, or for a more significant penetration of the Christian religion among the Pechenegs, was only in the second half of the 11th century, and that was in the Balkan Peninsula, where certain number of Pechenegs were settled after a prior permission from the Byzantine government.[1361]

However, it is necessary to note that regardless of the means used to get to the moment of dispatching a mission by the Byzantine government, this undertaking required the use of considerable resources, not only human, but also financial. Whether this process of Christianization took place in a foreign country or in the city of Constantinople, it made no difference because the ruler or leader who was to be baptized, together with his retinue, were richly bestowed by the emperor with a considerable sum of money, not

[1358] For the role and influence of this bishopric see Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, 108-113.; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 157-159.

[1359] For more details see Shepard, "Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples", 181.

[1360] Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 180.

[1361] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 426-428. See also Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 180.

only gold and silver, but also with bronze coins, as well as with a large number of various precious items, silk and clothing for baptism. If the baptism took place in the Byzantine capital, then the financial burden could be even greater. In that case, a grand reception was given in the Great Palace, with a number of banquets and other feasts in the ceremonial halls, where the foreign ruler or leader who was the target of a baptismal mission was the focus of attention of the Byzantine emperor.

The fact that the missionary work was perceived as an act that could have political implications by the Byzantine emperor, and the priests sent by the emperor were seen by "others" as his official diplomatic envoys, is indicated by the author of the *Life* of Constantine the Philosopher. He cites the advice which Michael III gave to Constantine, to keep in mind "...the imperial state and honour; and go honourably and with imperial support".[1362] An example of the political repercussion of the missionary activity are the Heruli. Procopius of Caesarea reports that Emperor Justinian I had persuaded these people "...all to become Christians. As a result of this, they adopted a gentler manner of life and decided to submit themselves wholly to the laws of the Christians, and in keeping with the terms of their alliance they are generally arrayed with the Romans against their enemies".[1363] However, this is not the only evidence that after Christianity was accepted, the Byzantine government perceived these states and peoples as its client states and allies who would unconditionally come to their aid if needed.[1364] Procopius notes that after the baptism of the Tzani who "...changed their belief to piety, all of them becoming Christians, and they altered their manner of life to a milder way, giving up all brigandage and always marching with the Romans whenever they went against their enemies."[1365] The people of Lazi, before the act of baptism, told Justin I that "...we wish thee to make us Christians like thyself, and we shell then be subject of the Roman Empire".[1366] The content of the letter which the Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos sent to the ruler of Abazgia, who was baptized by the Byzantines and had previously asked how the war against the Bulgarian ruler was

[1362] *Panonski legendi*, 37.

[1363] Procopius, *History of the Wars. Gothic War*, tr. Henry B. Dewing (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1919), VI.14.33-35.

[1364] The Byzantine Empire did not allow the baptized nations to forget that it was their benefactor and patron. The Byzantine emperor named as his "spiritual child" any ruler who accepted Christianity through him and the Patriarchate of Constantinople, a concept that was constantly repeated in the protocols for correspondence with foreign states, and which from an ideological point of view signified political dependence. For a brief analysis of this entire ideological concept, as well as for the quote, see Obolensky, "The Principles and Methods", 15-18. About the Tzani and the Heruli as allies see Ševčenko, "Religious Missions", 17, n.27. For Abyssinia as a client state, see *John of Malalas*, 251. For the use of the concept of "spiritual son" in the protocol, in the case of Bulgaria, see *The Book of Ceremonies*, 681-682.

[1365] Procopius, *Buildings*, III.6.7-8.

[1366] For Christianization of the Lazi see *The Chronicle of John*, 138.; *Theophanes*, 257.

progressing, should be observed in this context. In fact, whenever there was a need, the Byzantine government knew how to make good use of the benefits which resulted from the act of baptism itself and the acceptance of Christianity. A typical example is the help which Basileios II received from the prince of Kievan Rus in the form of a military unit of about 6,000 soldiers.

Hence, it can easily be concluded that missionary work was closely connected with the Byzantine military and political ends, and therefore with its diplomatic activity. However, this is only partially true. The Byzantines and their government did not see the missionary activity pragmatically, only through the prism of diplomacy as one of its primary means. This is not only evidenced by the missions from the time of Justinian I, but also by the inconsistency in its implementation, the lack of information in the sources about the existence of some kind of institutional body which coordinated this activity for a longer period of time and delt with the systematic baptism of the barbarians,[1367] as well as by the government's indifference for missions to certain peoples and regions due to lack of political interest.[1368] Several examples which indicate that if the Byzantine government had no political interest, it would not have conducted missionary activity or discontinued its patronage can be singled out. One such are the Bulgars in Crimea, who lived on the border of the Byzantine Empire, and were not a target of missionary activity by the imperial government.[1369] The European regions north of Moravia and Hungary, where peoples were still pagans or Christianity had just begun to penetrate, are another such example. What connects these two cases is the non-existent military and political danger for the survival of the Empire. The missions to the Rus should be observed in a similar political context. The first mission was sent only after a major military attack was made on Constantinople and its suburbs, several decades after the first contact with this people. The disappearance of the immediate military threat, and the peace which lasted for four decades, was probably also the reason why the Byzantine government lost interest in the complete baptism of the Rus and did not carry out this missionary activity with such zeal and dedication as in the case of Bulgaria. The same can be said about the mission in Moravia, where after the conversion of the Bulgars and the change in the political course of the ruler of this Central European state, there was no longer any military or political benefit for the imperial government.

[1367] Shepard, "Spreading the Word", 236.
[1368] Ivanov, "Religious Missions", 308.
[1369] Thomas S. Noonan, "Why Orthodoxy Did Not Spread among the Bulgars on the Crimea during the Early Medieval Era: An Early Byzantine Conversion Model", in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, eds. Guyda Armstrong and Ian. N. Wood (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 15-24.

The Christian religion proved to be an exceptional diplomatic means which allowed the Byzantine government to pacify and calm the aggressive intentions of its near and distant neighbours. Through the process of Christianization, the Byzantine Empire succeeded, at least temporarily, to impose nominal hegemony on the surrounding states, nations and tribes. At the same time, it led to an increase of the imperial borders' safety as a result of the security shield of "friends" and allies that was established, which, from a political and ideological point of view, owed service and favours to the Byzantine emperor as a supreme sovereign. However, the events that followed the conversion of these tribes, nations and states indicate the limitations which religion had as a means of diplomacy. In fact, they make it clear that the acceptance of Christianity did not mean complete disappearance of their aggressive tendencies and eternal maintenance of friendly relations with the Byzantine emperor. The conflict which lasted for more than a decade in the Balkans between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria during the reign of Simeon, only forty years after the conversion, points to the fact that even those who were Byzantines' "brothers" in faith were also very dangerous to the security of their Empire, as well as the peoples who did not accept Christianity.

Civilizational "prestige"

Another important means of Byzantine diplomacy which was frequently used by the imperial government between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century, but not only during this period, was its civilizational prestige.[1370] Formed as a result of several factors, it gave the Byzantine Empire a significant advantage in international relations, especially noticeable in establishing its own position in relation to foreign rulers and other influential dignitaries with whom it came into contact, whether it was of protocolary or military and political character. The civilizational prestige was, in fact, the result of foreigners' perception of the abundance and splendour of the Empire in relation to their own state, but also in relation to other states and peoples from its nearer and more distant neighbourhood. Liudprand of Cremona is just one of many who stated how a foreigner perceived the Byzantine Empire. He points out that the Byzantines and its capital in contrast to others "...surpass all these people in wealth as they do also in wisdom".[1371] This point of view was complemented by the Byzantine government itself, which at every suitable moment highlighted and emphasized to foreign embassies and rulers the

[1370] For civilizations as zones of prestige see Randall Collins, "Civilizations as a Zones of Prestige and Social Contact", in *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis*, ed. by Saïd Amir Arjomand and Edward A. Tiryakian (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004), 132-147.

[1371] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 50.

ancient heritage that derived from its political connection with Constantine the Great, and through him, with the Roman Empire. This was noted very clearly by Liudprand of Cremona during his second diplomatic visit to Constantinople in 968 during which high Byzantine officials informed him that "...the empty-headed and bungling pope is ignorant of the fact that holy Constantine translated the imperial symbols here, and brought the entire senate and the whole Roman knighthood, and left at Rome only lowly dependents, that is, fishers, food-peddlers, bird-hunters, bastards, plebeians, and slaves".[1372]

The first segment through which the Byzantine power publicly manifested its civilizational prestige was the perception of the symbolic value that Constantinople had in the eyes of the medieval man, both for the Byzantines and for other peoples.[1373] It was built on the banks of the Bosporus by the order of Constantine the Great, the Roman emperor who declared Christianity as official religion, who laid the foundations of the future Christian empire. The city was named by its own inhabitants only as "the City" (ἡ Πόλις) or "queen of cities", "polis basileuousa" (Βασιλὶς τῶν πόλεων), representing a special socio-political entity within the state.[1374] To the Slavic tribes of the Balkans, the Bulgarians, and to the Rus, it was Tsargrad, while among the northern peoples of Scandinavia as far away as Iceland, it was known as Miklagard, Mikligardr or Micklegarth, the "great city" that people admired immensely in the stories.[1375] Although during the 8th century as a result of several strong earthquakes and frequent occurrences of the plague there was a drastic reduction in its population, nevertheless, this was only temporary, thus regaining soon its position as the largest medieval Christian metropolis.

The reason for the exceptional attraction which the Byzantine capital had among other peoples was because of the overall splendour that it offered. Located in a place with an exceptional maritime setting, the foreigners' first sight of Constantinople evoked sighs and admiration. It was a city of long and wide streets, spacious forums where huge number of people could gather, with numerous private and state palaces, countless churches, the most famous of which was the Cathedral church of Saint Sophia, with markets and ports, as well as with other profane places in which, according to the opinion of contemporaries, one could hear all known languages in the world.[1376] For people who came from

[1372] Ibid, 270.

[1373] Averil Cameron, *The Byzantines* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 65.

[1374] Paul Magdalino, "Constantinople and the Outside World", in *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. Dion C. Smithe (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000), 151.

[1375] Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 125.

[1376] More details about Constantinople, its structure and socio-political importance in Dean A. Miller, *Imperial Constantinople* (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1969).; Paul Magdalino, "Byzantium = Constantinople", in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 43-54.; Herrin, *Byzantium*, 12-21.; Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, 201-223.; Charles Diehl, *Byzantium: Greatness and Decline* (New

a world of stone houses, huts or tents, the sight of such a large metropolis with so many monumental buildings and temples, with constant crowd in the wide streets and forums, and markets filled with products of all kinds, was surely enchanting, causing a cultural and civilizational shock to the observer.[1377] All those numerous foreigners who visited Constantinople returned to their countries with tales of the splendour and magnificence of the Byzantine Empire, as well as of its power and wealth, which probably made an impression on their countrymen.[1378] Moreover, Constantinople was the seat of the *basileus*, heir of the great Roman emperors, sovereign who, according to the imperial ideology and popular belief, was appointed by God as his earthly viceroy and guardian of the "chosen people", thus representing in the eyes of other peoples a sort of God's outpost on earth.[1379]

In his work *Retribution*, Liudprand of Cremona openly expresses his admiration for the Byzantine capital and presents a clear and vivid picture of the influence that Constantinople had on the senses of foreigners arriving in the city. He admires the Great Palace on several pages in his work, reporting that it "...surpasses all the buildings that I have ever seen not just in beauty but also in security".[1380] The same fascination with Constantinople can be seen from the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle*. He conveys the admiration that the envoys of the Rus prince Vladimir had for the Byzantine capital.[1381]

The Byzantines were fully aware of the influence which the appearance of their capital had on foreign peoples and often used it to their advantage. In fact, a Byzantine source confirms that they used the city not only as imperial propaganda, but also as an important diplomatic means in international relations. The author of *On Envoys* advises that during the visit of foreign embassies "...if the envoys come from a very distant country, and other peoples dwell between them and us, then we may show them anything we like in our country. We can act in like manner even if their country is located next to ours but is much weaker. But if they are greatly superior to us, either in size of their army or its courage, then we should not draw their attention to our wealth or the beauty of our women, but point out the number of our men, the polish of our weapons, and the height of our walls".[1382] This passage clearly indicates the practice of the Byzantine government to organize some kind of a tour of the city for the foreign envoys who came on a diplomatic visit to the capital,

Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957), 94-111.

1377 For a brief overview of the admiration that the foreigners had for Constantinople over the centuries see Krijnie N. Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople. The West and Byzantium, 962-1204: Cultural and Political Relations* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 46-47.; Paul Magdalino, "Byzantium = Constantinople", 46.

1378 Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople*, 57-58.

1379 Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 125.

1380 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 184, 197-198.

1381 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 111.

1382 On Strategy, 43.

showing the most important administrative buildings, palaces, churches and markets, or, alternatively, the high city walls and the guards that manned them.[1383] The goal of the Byzantine government was to win as an ally or deter from future aggression the people from where the delegation had came from, by displaying wealth and military power. Apparently, the idea which was to be conveyed to the foreign envoys was that if their sovereign became a friend and ally of the emperor, he would gain significant financial and political benefits.

This Byzantine propaganda, which was presented in the form of a "diplomatic" tour through Constantinople, was certainly organized during the second half of the 10th century for the Rus delegation, which had an assignment of presenting Christianity in detail, for the Magyar envoys from the middle of the 10th century, for the Pecheneg hostages, who, after the concluded treaties with the Byzantine Empire, stayed annually in the city as "friends", and it seems also for Olga of Rus and Liudprand of Cremona during his first visit. Depending on the origin of the envoys, the reception organized by the Byzantine government, like the one for the Magyars in 943 only superficially described in Skylitzes' *Synopsis Historion*, was intended to simultaneously impress and intimidate. After their accommodation in the *Apokrisiareion*, the palace where all foreign envoys were accommodated, a tour of Constantinople was probably arranged and organized for the Magyar envoys in order to leave on them a strong impression of Byzantine might.

Among the dignitaries who came from the Balkan states, except for Simeon,[1384] the imperial and civilizational prestige seems to have directly affected only Zacharias, the son of the Serbian ruler Pribeslav, for whom the sources indicate that he had long resided in Constantinople as a "friend" and was probably even born there,[1385] and it can be assumed with some certainty that during all of those years that he lived in the Byzantine capital he also attended the numerous ceremonies held in the Great Palace and throughout the city. That this prestige, as well as everything accompanying it, influenced the Serbian ruler[1386] and his policy of accepting the status of a client state is clearly indicated in *De Administrando Imperio*.[1387] Therefore, it cannot be excluded that one of the reasons behind this political decision of Zacharias was, in fact, the influence that Constantinople had on him, but also those of the imperial receptions, ceremonies, banquets and feasts,[1388]

[1383] Such tours were organized for foreign delegations in previous centuries as well. See, Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 124-125.

[1384] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 124. See also Shepard, "Manners maketh Romans?", 141-143.

[1385] For Zacharias see *DAI*, 32.100-104. According to Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, 113, Zacharias was educated there. For more details about Zacharias see Živković, *Portreti vladara*, 58-60.

[1386] This is also pointed out by Živković, *Portreti vladara*, 62-63.

[1387] *DAI*, 32.108-111.

[1388] Shepard, "Manners maketh Romans?", 135-152.

as well as the knowledge he received about the possible political and financial benefits if he maintained close political ties with the emperor.[1389]

According to the specificity of the existing diplomatic relations, if these were established, but also the relations which were to be achieved, this tour could include not only the wealth of the city shown through the abundance of markets and the crowd in the streets and forums, as well as the magnificent palaces and churches, with special emphasis on the cathedral church of Saint Sophia, but also the city walls, which were an inescapable sign of the military might of the Byzantine Empire. The display of all this splendour was probably supposed to convince the diplomatic envoys or the foreign rulers about the financial and ideological benefits which they would have if peaceful and allied relations with the emperor were established. The influence that this scene had on the envoys of the northern and steppe peoples is most vividly shown in the case of the Rus embassy sent by Vladimir or the *kouropalates* of Iberia.[1390] The same could undoubtedly apply to the Magyars and Pechenegs. It is hard to believe that Magyar or Pecheneg leaders who still lived in tents in the Pannonian plain and the Pontic steppe would have been immune to such an environment, since Konstantinos VII himself says that in return for their services they always demanded from the Byzantine government items that represented might and wealth.[1391]

However, it must be pointed out that the Byzantine attempts to charm and impress foreign visitors were not always successful. These could have even been counterproductive. All the public boasting of the Byzantines about their own wealth through the streets of Constantinople and the ceremonies in the Great Palace sometimes caused ridicule from the observer on one hand,[1392] while on the other, did not result in prevention of the aggressive intentions or the reduction of appetites for wealth among some of the neighbouring peoples. In fact, among some of the foreigners, it probably only further increased their desire for plunder, because this Byzantine practice gave a clear picture of the wealth behind the walls of the city, which they could seize for themselves through military campaign.

The implementation of the civilizational "prestige" in diplomacy did not produce as impressive results as the rest of the means which the Byzantines had at the disposal. Unlike gold and aulic titles, or "state" gifts, the sources clearly report that when it was used independently as a secondary means, separately of these three assets, it had ex-

1389 Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 49-51, 54, 59.

1390 For the Rus in *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 110-111. For the Iberian *kouropalates* see *Theophanes Continuatus*, 402.12-21.

1391 *DAI*, 13.24-28.

1392 *Liudprand of Cremona*, 244-245. Also, Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 244.

tremely limited usability in achieving the intended goals. But, even in the case when certain success was achieved with this display of prestige i.e., if the foreign rulers were won over with its help, that would have been short-lived, since after a certain period, if not immediately after, these states, nations or tribes, if it was in their interest, could again distance themselves politically, or take a hostile stance. However, despite the lack of practicality of the civilizational "prestige" within the realm of diplomacy, it still remained a means used by the emperor in international relations.

Ceremonies

The imperial ceremonies were the most important segment of the Byzantine civilizational prestige and clear evidence of the act of ritualization in diplomacy. In the hands of the emperor, they represented a significant ideological and propaganda tool by which he could strengthen his position inside the state, but also for pacifying the aggressiveness of the Byzantine neighbours and more distant nations. However, it is necessary to emphasize that, unlike other medieval rulers, he had a great advantage because he possessed not only a capital, but also a palace, where he could visually display his political and military power. That this was the main purpose of the imperial ceremonies is indicated by Emperor Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos in the preface of *The Book of Ceremonies*. According to his statement "...through praiseworthy ceremonial the imperial rule appears more beautiful and acquires more nobility and so is a cause of wonder to both foreigners and our own people". He further indicates that they were "...a radiant and newly cleaned mirror in which are seen what befits the imperial rule and what is worthy of the senatorial body, so that the reins of power will be managed with order and beauty...Through this the imperial power will have measure and order, reflecting the harmony and movement of the creator in relation to the whole, and it will appear to those subject to it to be more dignified and for this reason both sweeter and more wonderful".[1393] Almost everything that was part of the ceremony, from the ornaments and decorations, to the participants in the event, their clothes, as well as the place and role they had in the protocol, had its own specific symbolism. In that context, the ceremonial guard which was part of the imperial banquets and feasts, and was made up of different ethnicities (black Christians, Khazars and Turks), was intended to emphasize the universality of Byzantine power.[1394]

[1393] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 3-5.

[1394] Henry Maguire, "The Heavenly Court", in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2004), 247-258.; Shepard, "Information, disinformation", 238-239.; Featherstone, "Space and Ceremony", 600. For the ceremonial guard see Herrin, *Byzantium*, 180.

The Book of Ceremonies notes that there were two types of ceremonies which were prepared and performed by the Byzantine government, secular (profane) and ecclesiastical (sacral), depending on what event was to be celebrated or commemorated. Unlike secular imperial ceremonies that took place in the Great Palace and throughout the streets of the city, as a result of the nature of the ecclesiastical processions, the church clergy of the patriarchate of Constantinople, headed by the patriarch, also participated in their preparation, and part of the protocol was conducted in religious temples also.[1395] The sources which report on these two types of ceremonies prepared by the Byzantine government, and refer to this period of Byzantine history, are the now lost work of Peter the Patrician titled *About State Protocol*[1396] and *The Book of Ceremonies*.[1397] Unlike the ceremonies prepared by the Byzantine government, the church had its own ceremonies for the most important holidays and feasts which are preserved in the *Typicon* of Saint Sophia, which was composed, probably, sometime during the first decades of the 10th century.[1398]

The first phase of the ceremonies which were prepared by the Byzantine government, where the emperor was the central figure, should be sought from the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century i.e., during the reign of Emperor Theodosius I, when numerous imperial ceremonies of profane and sacral character e.g., for celebration of military victories, signing of a peace treaty, acclamations, birth of an heir to the throne, anniversaries, funerals, or for religious holidays, were established.[1399] What can be confirmed from the sources is that during the early period the emperor did not organize his own ecclesiastical ceremonies but, if there was a need, he imposed control over the processions prepared by the patriarchate of Constantinople to achieve his own agenda, as

[1395] More details about ecclesiastical ceremonies in Byzantine diplomacy see Dragan Gjalevski, "Ecclesiastical processions in Byzantine diplomacy and their impact in imperial foreign policy", in *Proceedings of the 8th International Symposium on Byzantine and Medieval Studies "Days of Justinian I", Skopje, 13-14 November, 2020*, ed. Mitko B. Panov (Skopje: Institute of National History, 2021), 201-221.

[1396] For *About State Protocol* see *The Lost History of Peter the Patrician. An account of Rome's Imperial Past from the Age of Justinian*, tr. Thomas M. Banchich (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 2-3, 19.

[1397] Cameron, "The construction of court ritual", 106-136.

[1398] Juan Mateos, *Le typicon de la Grande Église, Vol.1-2* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1962-1963). For the dating of the Typicon see John S. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship. The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1987), 190-197.

[1399] Brian Croke, "Reinventing Constantinople: Theodosius I's imprint on the imperial city", in *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians. Later Roman History and Culture, 284-450 CE*, ed. by Scott McGill, Cristiana Sogno and Edward Watts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 249-257. For ceremonies and imperial acclamations in the 5th and 6th centuries see Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, tr. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 59-69. For the continuity of these ceremonies throughout the centuries see Baldovin, *The Urban Character*, 181-189, 209-214.; *Constantinople in the Eight Century: the Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, ed. and tr. Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 170, 209-210, 212.

it was in the case of Theodosius II, Marcian or Anastasius I.[1400] At the time of the Macedonian dynasty, this situation changed and the Byzantine government organized ecclesiastical ceremonies where the emperor was a central figure. What should be noted is that these two types of ceremonies were not immutable but, with the passage of time and the numerous changes which occurred in society, the accession of another emperor to the throne, as well as various other factors and needs of the state, led to their change in appearance. Evidence of this are the imperial celebrations of military triumphs whose ceremonies (which the Byzantine government and elite wanted to present as unchanging) indicate that there was no such thing as a typical Byzantine triumph or, on the other hand, the small changes which can be observed in the Annunciation ceremony noted in *The Book of Ceremonies*.[1401] Another example for the changeability of imperial ceremonies over period of time was the issuing of a second and improved version of the *Cletorologion* of Philoteos with additions and changes in the text.[1402] In the period between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century, the ceremonies in the streets of Constantinople, or in the premises of the Great Palace, as well as in the churches, were so normal and frequent that they seem to have been conducted on a weekly, if not daily, basis.[1403] However, despite this frequency, the sources usually report about atypical ceremonies, those which did not adhere to the established protocol, so it can be rightly concluded that today in the sphere of Byzantine studies we have an incomplete picture of the Byzantine imperial ceremonies.[1404]

From the lines in *The Book of Ceremonies*, several different types of secular and ecclesiastical ceremonies can be distinguished according to the purpose for which they were prepared. What is noticeable is that part of these reflects the current protocols, while some are, in fact, a collection made out of historical interest from earlier sources,[1405] for example chapter 28 and 31 of the second book.[1406] In regards to secular ceremonies, they were related to the imperial activities, for instance protocolary reception of envoys which

[1400] *Theodore Anagnostes. Kirschengeschichte*, her. Gunter C. Hansen (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag GmbH., 1971), 320, 364-365,468.

[1401] Three Treaties, C.880-884.; *The Book of Ceremonies*, 169. For the changes see McCormick, "Analyzing imperial ceremonies", 2-6.; Cameron, "The construction of court ritual", 126-127.

[1402] Oikonomides, *Les Listes*, 80-81.

[1403] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 244-245, 250, 257, gives an account for at least three holidays.

[1404] McCormick, "Analyzing imperial ceremonies", 7-8.

[1405] John B. Bury, "The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogonnetos", *The English Historical Review* 22, no.86 (1907): 210-216. See also Featherstone, "Space and Ceremony", 597, 603.; Jeffrey M. Featherstone, "The Great Palace as Reflected in De Ceremoniis", in *Visualisirungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen - Gestalt und Zeremoniell*, ed. by Franz Alto Bauer (Istanbul: Ege Yayinlari/German Institute of Archaeology, 2006), 47.; Cameron, "The construction of court ritual", 109-110.

[1406] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 628-629, 631.

took place in the Magnaura palace, its Triklinium or Chrysotriklinium halls,[1407] coronations and acclamations of a "porphyrogennetos" child, birthday and funeral ceremonies, appointment of meritorious individuals to the post of imperial officials and elevation to the rank of dignitaries, other various imperial receptions and banquets, ceremonies in the Hippodrome, as well as ceremonies of a general type. Military triumphs were also included in this group of ceremonies. From the numerous reports of organized ceremonies in honour of a military triumph in the sources,[1408] the most detailed description can be found in the military manual *On Imperial Expeditions* and in *The Book of Ceremonies*, both manuscripts compiled in the 10th century, in which military triumphs of Justinian I, Theophilos and Basileios I are described, then the triumph in the name of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, which was held after the victory over the Arabs and contained religious elements, as well as a general model of a military triumph which was held in the Hippodrome.[1409] Ecclesiastical (sacral) processions that were organized by the Byzantine government and in which the emperor was a central figure were divided into celebrations and processions for the most important fixed, as well as for the movable Christian holidays and feasts throughout the year, such as Christmas, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Epiphany, Pentecost, Easter etc.[1410]

There is sufficient information in the available Byzantine sources which reports about the presence of a high foreign dignitary during the ceremonies organized by the Byzantine government.[1411] They indicate that this Byzantine diplomatic practice began as early as the 5th century. So, Marcellinus in his Chronicle mentions the presence of a foreign dignitary on one such event, in this case, "...John, the fifty-first pope of the Roman church...[who] at the request of king Theodoric came to Constantinople...[and] was greeted with magnificent honour. As the right-hand man...he celebrated in full voice the day of the Lord's resurrection in the Roman ritual".[1412] *The Book of Pontiffs* notes that Pope Agapitus, who was sent by king Theodahat in Constantinople as an envoy, was "...gloriously received".[1413] During the reign of Basileios I, the Byzantine government organized an

[1407] Franz Tinnefeld, "Ceremonies for Foreign Ambassadors at the Court of Byzantium and their Political background", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 19 (1992): 200-201.

[1408] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 294, presents a brief description of the military triumph of Ioannes I Tzimiskes after his victory over Svyatoslav.

[1409] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 497-508, 607-615.; Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treaties*, C.724-884. For a detailed analysis of military triumph ceremonies see McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 131-230.

[1410] Bury, "The Ceremonial Book (Continued)", 417-439. For further analysis of the ecclesiastical processions written in *The Book of Ceremonies* see Baldovin, *The Urban Character*, 197-202.

[1411] For a general analysis of the secular ceremonies which were attended by foreign envoys, see Tinnefeld, "Ceremonies", 193-213.

[1412] *The Chronicle of Marcellinus,* tr. by Brian Croke (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 42.

[1413] *Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis). The Ancient Biographies of First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715, Re-*

imperial ceremony in the name of the papal representatives Marinus and Donatus (they were the central figures in the procession), which started from the Golden Gate at the Theodosian Walls, a ceremonial honour associated only with the emperor.[1414] The author of *The Book of Ceremonies* reports that the celebration of the feast of St. Basil was celebrated together with the archon of Taron and the Bulgarian envoys, who were there as guests of honour.[1415] Also, the envoys which the prince of Rus, Vladimir, sent to Constantinople were honoured with church ceremony organized in their honour in the cathedral of Saint Sophia. If the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* is to be believed, their reaction was that "...we only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty".[1416] A similar statement was made by the *kouropalates* from Iberia, who was so impressed and amazed by the cathedral church and procession, which was probably prepared *ad hoc* on his behalf, that he declared "...God really dwells in that place".[1417] Liudprand of Cremona, during his diplomatic missions to Constantinople, personally witnessed two imperial ceremonies, one secular, relating to the payment of salaries to imperial officials, and the other ecclesiastical, a procession which he attended but was not prepared in his honour. According to his statement, it was organized for the celebration of the Pentecost.[1418]

It is also necessary to refer to the baptismal ceremonies of high-rank foreign dignitaries which took place in Constantinople from the 6th century onwards, events with a strict political agenda, in which the ecclesiastical processions were not explicitly mentioned and the emperor stood as a sponsor of the baptism. The first ceremony of that type happened during the reign of Justin I, and the momentum lasted until the 7th century when Herakleios converted the leader of the Hunnic people together with his nobles and bodyguards to the Christian faith.[1419] The policy of baptizing foreign dignitaries in Constantinople reappeared in the 10th century. One of them was Princess Olga of Rus. As the author of *The Russian Primary Chronicle* states, "...the emperor, with the assistance

vised edition, ed. and tr. Raymond Davis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 59, p.51.

1414 *Le Liber pontificalis vol.2*, 180.8-24. For the mission of Marinus and Donatus, see McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 144-145.

1415 *The Book of Ceremonies*, 139.; Bury, "The Ceremonial Book (Continued)", 420-421, indicates that the presence of a Bulgarian envoy was common after their baptism.

1416 *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 110-111.

1417 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 402.12-21.

1418 For the ceremony related to the payment of wages, see *Liudprand*, 200-202. According to *The Book of Ceremonies*, 58-61, during the Pentecost procession, the emperor is greeted by the Blues and the Greens, and before entering Saint Sophia, they shout three times: "Many years to you!" The same sentence that is pronounced only on this holiday, but with small changes, is noted by *Liudprand of Cremona*, 244-245, while attending a church procession during his second visit on June 7, 968.

1419 Gjalevski, "Ecclesiastical processions", 206.

of the Patriarch, accordingly baptized her".[1420] Other examples of baptismal ceremonies in this period are those of the Magyar leaders Bulcsu, Gylas and Termatzous, the great-grandson of Arpad. Of all, only Bulcsu is confirmed by the sources to have been personally "...baptised and received [from the font] by the emperor Constantine...", although Gylas and possibly Termatzous, who had also been converted to Christianity, probably received the same honour.[1421]

Main reason for maintaining this practice of conducting ceremonies with a high level of grandeur in the Grand Palace, the cathedral church of Saint Sophia or in other Christian temples, as well as throughout the streets and forums of the city was the need to strengthen the existing state ideology. That is, in a pictorial, visual way to demonstrate the stability and orderliness, the antiquity and immutability of the imperial regime to the eyewitnesses, to reinforce the image of the *basileus* as successor of the Roman emperors and first sovereign among the Christian rulers. Also, to emphasize the ideological connection with God, as well as the belief that God decided that this person was to rule the Empire, and that despite great number of dangers, as a result of God's favour, the Byzantine Empire would survive in the end. The other reason, which probably arose incidentally from the primary task of the ceremonies, and which seems to have been much used by the Macedonian dynasty,[1422] was to influence ideologically and politically the foreign visitors who were in Constantinople at the time and could attend and observe these processions from up close. In other words, these ceremonies, at least in the period in which *The Book of Ceremonies* was compiled, were used by the imperial government not only to achieve its ideological and religious ends, but also to disseminate the Byzantine prestige and imperial ideology beyond state borders, as well as to present an image of political hegemony over other polities, which, in fact, entered the domain of diplomacy and foreign policy. On the military side, what was intended to be conveyed to the neighbouring and more distant nations through these ceremonies, especially to those from the west and north, was the message that their warlike intentions, if they had any, were unfortunately futile and that it would be much more useful for them to maintain good and friendly relations with the Byzantine Empire.[1423]

In terms of which foreigners could attend the ceremonies, both secular and ecclesiastical, in which the Byzantine emperor participated, according to the sources, it could be anyone, from everyday guests in the city, for instance merchants, monks or pilgrims,

[1420] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 82.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.
[1421] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.
[1422] Cameron, "The construction of court ritual", 126-127, rightly notes that before the 10th century the Byzantine government continuously used ceremonies as a powerful propaganda tool.
[1423] Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 238.

through prisoners of war, to important dignitaries and envoys from another country who at that time were, for one reason or another, in the Byzantine capital.[1424] However, one could observe that a difference existed between which could attend what ceremony. Ordinary visitors from a foreign country, such as merchants, monks and pilgrims, could watch only those processions which were carried out through the streets, forums and churches of Constantinople i.e., in public places,[1425] although it is assumed that some parts of the Grand Palace around the upper terrace were probably accessible to everyone, at least during the day.[1426] While the ceremonies which took place inside the Grand Palace and afterwards in the Cathedral church of Saint Sophia, or some other church or chapel, like those written in *The Book of Ceremonies*, were fully or partially attended by foreign dignitaries or envoys, like the pope or Rome, or the anonymous 'Bulgarian guests', the *archon* of Taron and Liudprand of Cremona, who were in the palace at the personal invitation of the Byzantine emperor or on an important diplomatic mission. That these ecclesiastical ceremonies could also be seen by others is reported by Harun ibn-Yahya, who was a prisoner of war held in Constantinople in the early 10th century and, apparently, personally attended one such procession and left a detailed account, albeit with large number of exaggerations and inaccuracies.[1427]

However, there was one significant difference between the secular and ecclesiastical ceremonies. Unlike the first, the second, the church processions, were also prepared by the clergy from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, as indicated by the Typikon from Saint Sophia. What is noticeable is the existence of differences in the celebration of the same holiday between the ecclesiastical ceremonies prepared by the Byzantine government and those of the Patriarchate.[1428] It is assumed that the reason behind these differences in the religious processions in which the Byzantine emperor took an active role is that these may have been performed only occasionally,[1429] or, more likely, as a result of the fact that these ceremonies were tasked with achieving an additional goal or agenda, not only ideological but also political, than those prepared and performed by the Church.

[1424] Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople*, 50-51, 53-54.

[1425] Ibid, 62.

[1426] Albrecht Berger, "Imperial and ecclesiastical processions in Constantinople", in *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life,* ed. by Nevra Necipoğlu (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 77. According to Featherstone, "The Great Palace", 49, 54, although less guarded, in the 10th century the Great Palace was inaccessible to the ordinary population of Constantinople, while the imperial official could pass freely through the upper terrace, where the old buildings were located.

[1427] Berger, "Imperial and ecclesiastical processions", 77-79.

[1428] Berger, "Imperial and ecclesiastical processions", 75, 79-81.; Featherstone, "Space and Ceremony", 603-604.

[1429] Featherstone, "Space and Ceremony", 604.; Cameron, "The construction of court ritual", 111-112.; Berger, "Imperial and ecclesiastical processions", 79.

If this was an established practice i.e., for the Byzantine emperor to have his own ecclesiastical ceremonies different from those of the church, then these should have existed even before the work of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos was composed. Instead, the sources from the 5th, 6th and 9th centuries report something else. They do not note separate processions, but they inform about the practice of the Byzantine emperors to impose control on ceremonies organized by the Patriarchate of Constantinople for their own agenda. There was also a policy pursued by some Byzantine emperors i.e., to use, if necessary, the existing ecclesiastical ceremonies for diplomatic purposes, as Emperor Justinian I did in the case of Pope John. This was, in my opinion, a result of the personal decision of the Byzantine emperor due to the fact that John was the fifty-first pope of the Roman church, as well as the assumption it had that the usage of ecclesiastical ceremonies could be beneficial in the further negotiations. Furthermore, in his *Chronicle* Theophanes Confessor reports about the initiative of Emperor Maurikios who "...introduced litany at Blachernai in memory of the Holy Mother of God, at which laudations of our Lady were to be delivered. He called it a *panegyris*".[1430] So, if the emperor had authority to introduce litany at his request, probably the same could be said for the ecclesiastical ceremonies. Hence, the change observed in the 10th century with the existence of a separate ecclesiastical ceremonies for the emperor in relation to important religious holidays and feasts, actually, indicates the fact that the emperors of the Macedonian dynasty, probably like Maurikios before, saw the advantage which the imperial prestige would gain among their own subjects and foreigners alike (since foreign policy and diplomacy were in the personal domain of the emperor) if they had their own ecclesiastical ceremonies, and had taken steps to accomplish that idea. Evidence of this are the activities undertaken by the representatives of this dynasty, for instance building of a new church, new throne in the Magnaura palace, new customs and holidays, as well as the ceremony on behalf of the feast of St. Elijah which was introduced, it seems, by Emperor Basileios I or his son Leon VI.[1431] The final results of their initiative are the ceremonies written in the work of Porphyrogennetos.[1432]

What can be concluded is that the ecclesiastical ceremonies in which the Byzantine emperor was an active participant were seen as means for dissemination of the

[1430] *Theophanes*, 387.

[1431] *The Book of Ceremonies*, 114-118. See also Ann Moffatt, "Variations in Byzantine Imperial Ceremonial: The De Ceremoniis of Constantine Porphyrogennetos", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 24 (1997): 221-222, 226.; Paul Magdalino, "Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988): 194-196.

[1432] Although Baldovin, *The Urban Character*, 202, claims that the reason for separate ecclesiastical processions was the reluctance of the rulers of the Macedonian dynasty to move away from the Great Palace. However, the processions at Pege, the Church of the Holy Apostles or Saint Mokios at the Theodosian Walls indicate the opposite.

imperial propaganda by the government. In that context, imperial ceremonies can be, actually, defined as a form of visual medium which transmitted political and ideological information to the recipient though stimulation of the beholder's optical senses. And the Byzantines were fully aware (as Theodosius II, Anastasius, Justinian I and Maurikios activities, or Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos statement in *The Book of Ceremonies*, indicates), of the effect and impact that a well-organized ceremony with high-level of grandeur could have on its observers, both domestic and foreign. Confirmation of the influence that it had on foreigners can be seen in the statements of Vladimir's envoys, the *kouropalates* of Iberia and Harun ibn-Yahya after they attended such processions.

However, it must be emphasized that the ecclesiastical ceremonies were, first and foremost, organized for internal use i.e., to strengthen the position of the emperor among his subjects and only afterwards for another, external use, such as diplomacy and foreign policy. Even when these were used more frequently in diplomacy, as during the reign of the Macedonian dynasty, the ecclesiastical ceremonies we're not seen by the Byzantines as a diplomatic means per se, in the way the imperial titles and gold were perceived i.e., as pillars of Byzantine might, but more as a means for disseminating propaganda which helped impress foreign dignitaries and envoys before the forthcoming negotiations, as a display of the image of hegemony,[1433] in order to present and expand the Byzantine culture, as well as to bolster imperial ideology, and with it the imperial prestige, across the known world.

Concerning the baptismal ceremonies, the involvement of the Byzantine emperor as an active participant and godfather, actually, indicates an existence of a certain protocol with high-level of grandeur and thus a possibility, as a result of the fact that it was a religious matter and the foreigners were actually dignitaries of a highest rank and importance, that an *ad hoc* ecclesiastical ceremony was organized in that honour. The religious ceremony probably started in the Grand Palace and ended in the church of Saint Sophia where the aforementioned dignitaries were baptised, with an intention to present to the audience, the population in Constantinople, both citizens and foreign travellers, the greatness of the Byzantine imperial prestige and the position of the emperor in the world in relation to other rulers. The end result of this diplomatic endeavour with the foreign dignitaries was not a total success. Ztathios of the Laz and the king of Heruli remained close Byzantine ally, while Grot, the king of the Bosporan Huns was killed by its own men.[1434] The Magyar Gylas "...remained faithful to Christianity; [and] he made no inroad

[1433] The presence of the *archon* of Taron or the Bulgarians for the feast of Saint Basil is one such example.
[1434] For Ztathios see *Malalas*, 246. For the Heruli see Walter Goffart, *Barbarian Tides. The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 208-209. For Grot Moravcsik, "Byzantine Christianity", 39.

nor did he leave Christian prisoner unintended."[1435] On the other hand, Bulcsu "...violated his contract with God and often invaded Roman land with his people."[1436] The Byzantines, according to the sources, fared no better with Olga of Rus.[1437]

In terms of implementation in diplomacy, the imperial ceremonies had limited field applicability, unlike gold and imperial titles. The first reason was the need for specific locations, spaces and objects, for example churches, forums, streets and a palace.[1438] The second is that these could be used only when foreign envoys or dignitaries were in Constantinople and when their visit coincided with some important event, for instance military triumph, birthday or a religious holiday, or a feast for which a procession was organized. This at least refers to the ceremonies which can be found in *The Book of Ceremonies* in which the emperor was a central figure, although, as previously mentioned, some of these were organized for a special purpose if an important visitor, such as papal legates, Vladimir's envoys, or the *kouropalates* of Iberia, had arrived and there was a need to achieve a specific political end.

In that respect, the ceremonies can be understood as secondary means of Byzantine diplomacy. Aside from the glorification and reverence of Christianity which were the focus of the ecclesiastical processions, the ceremonies in general were an ideal way to present the imperial prestige to foreigners, the image of the emperor as equal to the apostles, guardian of the Church, the one true faith and "the chosen people", as well as the position he wanted to maintain in the medieval political hierarchy.

If the dissemination of Byzantine prestige, imperial ideology and hegemony beyond state borders can be called an "abstract" aspect of these ceremonies, then its "practical" aspect was to "smooth the edges" in diplomatic talks or negotiations before these even started (like the secular ceremony in honour of Marinus and Donatus, the representatives of Pope Hadrian II) or during (in the case of popes John and Agapitus, or Liudprand of Cremona), in attempt to make the opponent more compliant to the Byzantine claims and other demands which would follow this political process. Furthermore, the Byzantine government used the imperial ceremonies and the foreign delegations which participated in these to provide,

[1435] Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 231.

[1436] Idem.

[1437] *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 83.

[1438] For the strong connection that existed between the court and the capital in the Byzantine Empire, see Paul Magdalino, "Court and Capital in Byzantium", in *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires. A Global Perspective*, ed. Jeroen Duindam et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 132-141. For the influence that the palaces possessed in medieval diplomacy, see Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 57-59.; al-Hatib al-Bagdadi, in Alexander A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et Arabes Tome II, la dynastie macédonienne (867-959). Extraits des Sources Arabes, ed. Henri Grégoire, Marius Canard* (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Historie Orientales et Slaves, 1950), 73-79.

through an immediate, closer and more cordial contact, a detailed information about the customs and beliefs of the tribes, nations and states from which they came, thus increasing its own diplomatic capacity. On the other hand, the presence of people in these ceremonies and their role in them had its own political weight. According to the reaction of Liudprand of Cremona during his second diplomatic mission to Constantinople, it actually determined the political importance of the people or state in the Byzantine "hierarchy of states".[1439] The ruler or any other dignitary who ignored the imperial invitation, or did not receive such recognition, risked appearing insignificant in the eyes of his neighbours, or among his elite, which could ultimately lead to dissatisfaction in his country and his political downfall.[1440] If the diplomatic envoy was sent by a state, or a tribe, which had certain hostile attitude towards the Byzantine Empire, although not a publicly expressed aggression in a form of military conflict, than the ceremonies offered an exceptional political opportunity to avoid this danger through proper communication during the ceremonies, or for it to be completely annulled, thus leaving room for the establishment of a more cordial and closer relationship. If the envoys were sent by a ruler who had no warlike intentions, then the ceremonies represented an exceptional opportunity for the Byzantine government to gain a new "friend" and ally by offering them this honours to attend one such an event.

The same can be concluded for the act of baptism of foreign rulers and other high dignitaries in which the emperor was an active participant. The personal ceremony in the Great Palace involving the Byzantine emperor, followed by a baptism and elevation to a high position in the imperial court was an extremely important means of the Byzantine diplomacy. The personal stamp of kinship which this event had was highly effective both in convincing foreigners of the good will of the Byzantine Empire and the exceptional benefit they would receive from becoming its ally and maintaining good relations with the emperor, as well as in creating a possibility for establishing strong political connections where these did not exist, on a personal level. By accepting all these honours, the foreign rulers and dignitaries were then perceived as friends of the Byzantine Empire, who, according to the established imperial ideology, as Christians and part of his political retinue, were supposed to help defend the interests of the emperor, and at the same time, to stop any aggressive intentions they had against his imperial dominions. However, as previously mentioned, all this diplomatic activity did not guarantee that the established relations would be respected.

In contrast to its implementation, the level of influence which these secular and ecclesiastical ceremonies had in Byzantine foreign policy transcended its limitations.

[1439] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 250-251.
[1440] Shepard, "Byzantine diplomacy", 64-65.

Although, for these ceremonies to have some real practical effect in diplomacy, the foreign envoys or dignitaries needed to be present in the Byzantine capital, nevertheless, through oral transmission of the experience from individuals who attended such events, the political message which was intended to be disseminated, and with it the influence and prestige of the emperor, actually, transcended the existing spatial boundaries of the ceremony itself. Numerous foreigners who visited Constantinople and attended these imperial ceremonies as spectators returned to their own countries with stories of the magnificence and grandeur of the Byzantine Empire, as well as of its power and wealth, which probably made an impact on their compatriots.[1441] The presence of stories amongst the Slavs in the Balkans, and in the land of the Rus, about "Tzargrad" i.e., Constantinople, or amid the population of the distant Scandinavia, all the way to the remote Island, which speak in their sagas about Miklagard, Mikligardr or Micklegarth, the "great city", are but examples of this tendency.

At an overall, from a "practical" point of view, the ceremonies helped the Byzantines to acquire, albeit temporary, a leader of a certain state, or a tribe, as an ally. Furthermore, this allowed them to strengthen the political connection with an already existing ally. Also, the ceremonies aided in attracting a state, or a tribe, into their cultural, and thus political, sphere of influence or, to maintain the image of might and prestige before an equally powerful, or even superior, political opponent. Unfortunately, the ecclesiastical procession could backfire or achieve nothing noteworthy in a political sense. One such case was the second diplomatic mission of Liudprand of Cremona to Constantinople during which he maintained his hostile attitude which he had towards the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas or the diplomatic debacle that happened with Bulcsu and Olga of Rus soon after their baptism.

The sources confirm that the imperial ceremonies were used in Byzantine diplomacy and, compared to the pillars of Byzantine might, gold and titles, these had limited applicability, but without spatial limitation in relation to their impact and influence in the foreign policy. These were not diplomatic means *per se*, and were probably never seen as such by the Byzantines. During the Macedonian dynasty, as the sources suggest, a change in imperial policy occurred, and an increased use of ceremonies appeared in diplomacy, when parallel ecclesiastical ceremonies were established in order to enhance the image and prestige of the Byzantine emperor before his own subjects and the foreigners alike. And even then, these ceremonies were seen more as a propaganda tool intended for helping the official negotiations which would soon follow. The Byzantine government knew, according to their knowledge and understanding, how and when to apply them in

[1441] Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople*, 57-58.

an attempt to help the negotiation process achieve certain political goals. However, like all other secondary means in diplomacy, these were highly inconsistent and unreliable. The difference between success and failure depended on a number of factors, both external and internal, but mostly on the subject of the Byzantine diplomatic activity and its susceptibility to influence. And there is enough evidence in the sources to confirm this statement.

Dynastic marriages

The effectiveness of gold and imperial titles in diplomacy, for which Michael Psellos proudly reports and according to whom these were the means which maintained the Byzantine hegemony, depended for the most part on the skill and ability of the people who conducted the various diplomatic activities. In regard to the missions abroad, it referred to the envoys that were sent to achieve an intended goal. The situation was completely different if these activities were to be undertaken at home, within the walls of the Grand Palace. Here, instead of focusing on the envoys, another protocol was established which, in addition to the bestowment of gold and luxurious items as a type of "state" gift, consisted of receptions before the emperor, various ceremonies, banquets and feasts. The Byzantine emperor played a significant role in this whole process due to the fact that he could now be directly involved and introduce a personal tone in the negotiations with the foreign rulers and other important dignitaries.

In addition to all previously presented assets, means and institutionalized rituals, there was another means which can be singled out within the sphere of Byzantine diplomacy. These were the dynastic marriages.[1442] The basis for their implementation as means was the assumption that the marriage alliance concluded between two ruling families possessed certain "political" aspect through which, in fact, strong ties were created in the foreign policies of the two states. The strength of this relationship, on the other hand, arose from the perception among the concerned parties about the closeness which existed between them established through an idea of kinship, similar with the acts of baptism and adoption. These two bonds which were of social and sociological nature, formed between individuals, or families which were not related by blood, began with the offering or accepting of certain service, help or protection. The source material provides a

[1442] For more details about the dynastic marriages see Ruth Macrides, "Dynastic marriages and political kinship", in *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992), 263-280.

large number of examples which indicate that the medieval man in one such relationship sought friends as partners, or people with whom he wanted to be friends, individuals who were mainly rich and had high social status, but also huge influence in society. It often happened that the bonds which were established between families or individuals were long-lasting and outlived the founders themselves.[1443]

The same applies to dynastic marriages. Through this act, basically a kinship was formed where it did not exist. However, the relationship that was established usually lasted until the marriage had persisted, or until the end of the lifetime of the offspring that resulted from it. The dynastic marriage also provided a certain benefit, which, depending on the political position of the two states, could be military and political, or just political. Furthermore, it provided to the state from which the bride had come from, an entry into the court retinue of the groom, thus allowing through her and her personal entourage, which in turn could be made of relatives or compatriots, the dissemination of its cultural and political influence. Also, the constant contacts which the bride maintained with her family at home through letters, messengers and personal visits, provided an opportunity for a member of her entourage who would be recruited as an informant to freely spy and transmit unhindered important political and military information to his superiors. The princess herself could unknowingly perform this function if she talked about the events in the ruling court while conversating with her relatives.[1444] The other side also received certain privileges and benefits, if the princess came from an influential and wealthy country, in a form of an increase in political prestige in the eyes of its neighbours and other states,[1445] financial resources presented as monetary allowance for the princess,[1446] as well as military aid against external aggressors if there was a need for it.

However, the sources point to the fact that until the beginning of the 11th century, the Byzantine Empire did not practice the arranging of dynastic marriages with foreign royal families. There are only three cases in the sources in which a Byzantine emperor

[1443] There are examples where such kinships were established for spiritual or intellectual and for moral reasons. In the middle of the 6th century, Justinian established such a relationship with the rulers of the Heruli and the Huns, which brought him a significant military benefit. See Macrides, "Dynastic marriages", 264-266.

[1444] The constant visits of Maria Lekapena, the wife of the Bulgarian emperor Petar, to her grandfather, the Byzantine emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, can be taken as one such example, for which reports *Theophanes Continuatus*, 422.10-15.

[1445] This type of privilege was granted to the Bulgarian empire after the marriage between Petar and Maria Lekapena. During imperial ceremonies and banquets, Bulgarian envoys had priority over most other diplomatic representatives. This was noted by *Liudprand of Cremona*, 250, during his second mission to Constantinople in 968.

[1446] Macrides, "Dynastic marriages and political kinship", 277-279, indicates that apart from gold bestowed for the wedding or on an annual basis, sometimes territories were also donated as a dowry, the taxes of which would met the financial needs of the princess.

married a noblewoman from a foreign country. These were Justinian II, Konstantinos V and Leon IV.[1447] The same situation is observed in the period from the middle of the 9th until the beginning of the 11th century. Number of such relationships can be counted on one hand. The only example for the 9th century is that of the "porphyrogennita" Anna, the daughter of Leon VI, who was sent to the West to be a wife of Louis III of Provence,[1448] while between the beginning of the 10th and the first two decades of the 11th century, three dynastic marriages were agreed with foreign rulers, one of which was that of Theophano, the granddaughter of Ioannes I Tzimiskes, with the German crown prince Otto II.[1449] The reason for this attitude of the Byzantine government towards the dynastic marriages can be observed in the statement of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos in *De Administrando Imperio*. It represents one of the most complete and very vivid opinions about the dynastic marriage seen from the point of view of a Byzantine ruler. According to him "... never shall an emperor of the Romans ally himself in marriage with a nation of customs differing from and alien to those of the Roman order, especially with one that is infidel and unbaptized, unless it be with the Franks alone; for they alone were accepted by that great man, the holy Constantine, because he himself drew his origin from those parts; for there is much relationship and converse between Franks and Romans. And why did he order that with them alone the emperors of the Romans should intermarry? Because of the traditional fame and nobility of those lands and races".[1450]

This repulsive view which existed in the Byzantine Empire in regards to arranging dynastic marriages with foreigners stemmed from its imperial ideology about the divine origin of the political power of the emperor. Positioning himself in the role of God's vice-regent on earth, guardian and protector of the Christian church and the "chosen people", the position of the Byzantine emperor was on a higher plane than that of other foreign rulers, whether he was a Christian or not. The idea of giving the hand of the sister or daughter of the emperor, "born in the purple", to such a ruler, or marrying a Byzantine crown prince with his daughter, was seen as something offensive.[1451] According to Konstantinos VII, this Byzantine perception did not apply to the "Franks", who were considered a glorious and honourable people. The actual reason behind this statement was the rise of Charlemagne and the establishment of the Frankish Empire in the 9th century, which led to significant military and political changes in Christian Europe. The military and political

[1447] All these emperors married Khazar princesses. For the marriages of Justinian II and Konstantinos V see *Theophanes*, 520, 589. For Leon IV see *DAI*, 13.133-136. Also, Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 137-138.; Macrides, "Dynastic marriages", 276.

[1448] Macrides, "Dynastic marriages", 267.

[1449] Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 141.; Macrides, "Dynastic marriages", 278.

[1450] *DAI*, 13.114-122.

[1451] Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, 137.

power which the successors of Charlemagne continued to possess despite the disintegration of the empire after his death, the connections they had with the Roman Papacy, as well as the conflict of interests which arose in Southern Italy during the 10th century, only further strengthened this Byzantine conviction. Another reason why Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos looked so favourably on the marriage with the Franks was of a personal nature. His half-sister was married to a nobleman from the West, and his son and heir to the throne, Romanus II, had his first marriage with Bertha, the daughter of Hugo of Italy, which was short-lived because she died after only a few years.[1452]

The sources indicate that there were numerous requests from the states of Western Europe, as well as from those "...infidel and dishonourable tribes of the north..."[1453] for allying themself with the Byzantine Empire through arranging a dynastic marriage with a "porphyrogennita" princess. Liudprand's second embassy to Constantinople was exclusively for this purpose, the arranging of a dynastic marriage between the German crown prince Otto II and Princess Anna, the sister of Basileios II, "born in the purple", a proposal which was decisively rejected by the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas despite the ideological approval given in *De Administrando Imperio* by Porphyrogennetos.[1454] However, the source material indicates that being related to a member of the ruling family of the "ancient" Byzantine Empire who was not "born in the purple" also represented a strong political benefit and prestige for the foreign rulers.[1455] The reason why they exclusively sought a "porphyrogennita" princess, or an heir to the imperial throne for marriage, was the belief in the political and divine legitimacy of power which arose from the birth in the purple room of the Grand Palace, but also due to the blood kinship with a person born in purple, an opinion probably established by the Byzantines themselves, but wholeheartedly accepted by others.[1456] This is probably the main reason why during the negotiations in Hebdomon, Simeon asked the Byzantine regency to marry his daughter to the young emperor Konstantinos VII. On the other hand, the motive behind the approval of this

[1452] About the marriage of Romanos II with Berta see *DAI*, 26.66-72.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 223.; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 431.11-19. See also Macrides, "Dynastic marriages", 268.

[1453] *DAI*, 13.106-107.

[1454] The reason for the rejection of this proposal by the Byzantine government was founded on purely military and political ground. Just a few years later, Ioannes I Tzimiskes sent his granddaughter Theophano to Otto II.

[1455] Otto II did not reject the princess Theophano, but according to the actions he took afterwards, it can be seen that he wholeheartedly accepted her, even though she was not a "porphyrogennita". See Macrides, "Dynastic marriages", 278-279.; Ostrogorski, "Kijevski knez Vladimir", 142.

[1456] Citation of the marriage between Petar and Maria Lekapena as a precedent only to allow the same to the much more powerful Otto indicates that the foreigners believed in this idea, but also that among themselves they followed very closely and jealously the dynastic connections they had with the Byzantine Empire. See *Liudprand of Cremona*, 248-249. Also, Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 245-247.; Ostrogorski, "Kijevski knez Vladimir", 141-142.

request from Simeon by the regency, it seems, should be sought in the idea of the patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos that with this step, in fact, the Bulgarian knyaz, who would be connected by blood to the Byzantine throne, would no longer have any reason for an aggressive posture in the future, but would become a close ally of the Byzantine Empire. Additionally, the Bulgarian ruler, as a father-in-law (basileopator) of the Byzantine emperor, would have gained international reputation, but also certain influence in the Byzantine court, something that, according to the patriarch's report, he wholeheartedly desired.[1457]

However, it should be noted that Porphyrogennetos' statement in *De Administrando Imperio* seems more like a declarative and personal one, because the remaining two marriages in the 10th century were with rulers from the Balkan and the northern peoples. The first was between the Bulgarian emperor Petar and Maria Lekapena, the granddaughter of Romanos I Lekapenos, while the second marriage was between Vladimir, the prince of Rus, and the "porphyrogennita" Anna, the sister of Emperor Basileios II. From the long description of the wedding ceremony of Petar and Maria Lekapena in Theophanes Continuatus, it can be rightly concluded that the decision of the Byzantine government to conclude this marriage in 927 with Petar of Bulgaria was, actually, an unprecedented event in the Byzantine history. The statement of Konstantinos VII in *De Administrando Imperio*, his clear displeasure with this act, and his attempt to present some explanation for this action of Romanos I Lekapenos, only confirms this Byzantine perception,[1458] but it also indicates that despite the marriage of Petar with Maria Lekapena and the fact that the Bulgarians were Christians for almost a whole century, in the eyes of the Byzantines from the middle of the 10th century they were still seen as "barbarians" with foreign and backward customs.[1459]

What were the factors which caused the Byzantine Empire to deviate from its declared aversion of arranging a dynastic marriage with the "barbarians" from the north? The flexibility shown by the Byzantine government with the decision to marry Princess Maria with the Bulgarian ruler Petar was due to pragmatic reasons. The goal was to put an end to two decades of constant warfare and the military and political stand-off position in which the Byzantine Empire found itself in the Balkan Peninsula. The motive behind this change in the Byzantine perception and acceptance of a dynastic marriage with a "barbarian" was most likely a result of the conclusion that, apparently, indicated that through a blood connection of the two ruling families there would be not only an end to the military conflicts, but also a return of the political situation before the conflict.

[1457] Nicholas, *Letters*, 11.122-124.
[1458] *DAI*, 13.149-175.
[1459] Ibid, 13.175-181.

The sources report that the benefits which the Byzantine government received from this dynastic marriage were multiple. From a military point of view, it led to cessation of hostilities and conclusion of a peace treaty, as well as a release of a large number of prisoners from Bulgarian captivity. The political implications from this marriage were also in favour of the Byzantine Empire. The Bulgarian emperor Petar accepted the *oecumene* and the place which automatically belonged to him as a result of his marriage to the Byzantine princess. Although it was condemned by certain Byzantine circles, for instance by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos,[1460] nevertheless, this marriage was a strong guarantee both for maintaining the peace which has been signed and for dissemination of Byzantine political and cultural influence in the Bulgarian capital. At the same time, it represented an exceptional opportunity for an unnoticeable infiltration of an informant or a spy in the entourage of the Bulgarian empress in the palace in Preslav, who would then transmit important information to the Byzantine government.

Another example that the dynastic marriage was seen as a means through which an alliance could be concluded, or a treaty of friendship, but also for acquiring military assistance against a common enemy, were the offers of marriages to the sons of Romanos II, Basileios and Konstantinos, with unnamed Bulgarian noblewomen of royal blood, probably the sisters of Boris II. This highly generous proposal by the Byzantines, of which the past Byzantine governments did not even think about and looked at it with extremely great repulsion, was wholeheartedly accepted by the Bulgarians. They immediately sent these noblewomen to Constantinople with a request for immediate military assistance against the Rus led by Svyatoslav, which was apparently promised by the emperor. However, this plan of Nikephoros II Phokas was not realized as a result of his violent dethronement from the Byzantine throne.[1461]

The same Byzantine pragmatism regarding the marriage of Maria Lekapena is also observed in the marriage arranged between Prince Vladimir and Anna, the sister of Basileios II. However, unlike the situation with Bulgaria, where the pacification of this aggressive neighbour was in the foreground, now the goal was to conclude an alliance and get help in military troops, which the Byzantine emperor desperately needed for waging the civil war. Success was achieved in this case too. In exchange for the hand of Anna, the purple-born princess, the Byzantine emperor received a powerful ally in the face of the prince of Rus and considerable military aid from his son-in-law, an end to the hostilities between their two states around the city of Cherson, and increased Byzantine influence

[1460] For more details about the view of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos towards the marriages between Byzantine princesses and foreign rulers in *DAI*, 13.104-175. See also Saška Georgieva, "Diplomatic Marriages in Medieval Bulgarian Foreign Policy", *Bulgarian Historical Review* 1 (1993): 120.

[1461] *Leo the Deacon*, 130-132.

at the court in Kiev. However, it must be noted that these dynastic marriages should probably not be perceived as a main and only diplomatic means which allowed the two sides to approach each other and led to the conclusion of treaty, but as a kind of guarantee of the signed peace to which both sides had to adhere. The act of the renaming of Maria Lekapena to Eirene after her marriage to Petar is sufficient evidence.[1462]

The dynastic marriages were rarely used for ideological reasons as a means in diplomacy by the Byzantines. However, in the cases in which these were used by the Byzantine government, it can be concluded from the sources that these marriages, as a result of the goal they were supposed to achieve, apart from political, also had a certain military aspect. In the first case, the marriage arrangement not only led to a conclusion and signing of a treaty, but it was supposed to guarantee its longevity, as well as to assist in pacifying an aggressive and warlike neighbour. In the second case, it presented a kind of political "barter". In exchange for a princess "born in the purple", the Byzantine emperor received an ally and direct military aid in a form of mercenary troops which helped him overcome the difficult and unfavourable situation in which he found himself. The protraction of Basileios II to send his sister Anna to Vladimir, the prince of Rus, indicates the reluctance of the emperor in taking this step, but also to the fact that in the 10th century the dynastic marriage was most likely perceived as last resort of Byzantine diplomacy by the imperial government.

Diplomatic arguments: History, Ethnography, and Religion

The ratification and signing of a peace treaty was possible only after long and difficult negotiations, where both negotiating parties presented their positions, interests and goals, justified them and tried to achieve these by presenting different arguments. In the context of these arguments which had a diplomatic value to shape and change the course of the negotiations in favour of the Byzantine government, thereby justifying the political and military activities which it had already conducted or intended to conduct in the near future, besides arguments of a political and military nature related to the current security of the state, this group also included various facts from history, ethnography and religion.

[1462] The only thing *Theophanes Continuatus*, 414.1-7, and Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 216-217, report from the Byzantine-Bulgarian peace treaty concluded in 927 is the marriage between Petar and Maria Lekapena. According to *Liudprand of Cremona*, 129, Princess Maria changed her name to Eirene ("peace").

The first argument by which the Byzantines tried to justify their own political and military activities, or to highlight their political interests and ends, and thus present them as legally legitimate, were the events from the near or distant past. The fact that history was perceived as an important argument in official negotiations by the Byzantine government is indicated by the correspondence of Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos with the Bulgarian ruler during the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict where one can notice frequent use of historical events by the patriarch in an attempt to give legitimacy to his own arguments,[1463] to which Simeon, who as a youth was educated in Constantinople, was, probably, fully acquainted with.[1464] The knowledge of history was essential not only in relations with Western Europe, which can be seen from the second diplomatic mission of Liudprand,[1465] but also from the missions which were sent in the surrounding states, as well as to the Arab Caliphate and other Islamic states. Evidence of this policy are the historical events related to the Islamic world from its early period which were part of the chapters in *De Administrando Imperio* and which the author of this manuscript probably thought that would be useful for Byzantine diplomacy.[1466] The knowledge of the recent or ancient past which the Byzantine envoys had to possess as a negotiating skill needed to exceed the knowledge not only of the envoys from Western Europe, but also that of the Muslims, because from a political and ideological point of view it was extremely important to maintain the prerogatives of imperial power associated with the Byzantine emperor.[1467]

Apart from the political and ideological implementation of history in Byzantine foreign policy, sources note that it also had its own practical usefulness. They indicate that the Byzantine Empire used the events from the near or distant past in its relations with other rulers, not only with those from the west or east, but also with the Balkan and northern peoples. The Byzantine government frequently used history as a kind of warning to anyone who wanted to conquer the imperial city of Constantinople. When Simeon's intention to attack the Byzantine capital was exposed by the Byzantine agents, Nikolaos Mystikos tried to prevent this undertaking by reminding him of the fate of previous such attacks. For this purpose, he mentioned the unsuccessful campaign of the Avars and the Sasanians in 626, the destruction of the Sasanian Empire with which the Byzantine Empire was in a long and protracted conflict, both political and military, polities which ac-

[1463] Nicholas, *Letters*, 5.122-143, 10.30-45. Also, Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 97.
[1464] Angelov, *Srednovekovnata bălgarska diplomaciia*,154-157.
[1465] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 270.
[1466] *DAI*, 14-22.
[1467] As God's vice-regent on earth and protector of Christians, maintaining the prestige of the emperor before the members of another religion, such as Islam, was very important. See Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 98-99.

cording to Nikolaos Mystikos "...are [now] nothing but a memory...", while "...the Roman Empire stands firm on its own bottom." He also mentioned the seven-year siege by the Arabs, who, although in possession of multitude of ships and an army much larger than the Bulgarian ruler could ever muster under his command, yet, at the end all these attempts to militarily conquer the city of Constantinople proved to be unsuccessful.[1468] The analogy was obvious. Simeon's attack was destined to fail, just like other similar unsuccessful ventures in the past which did not have divine favour, for ultimately the Almighty was on the side of the Byzantines.[1469] In a similar way, the Byzantine government tried to prevent other attacks on its imperial territory. In an attempt to force Svyatoslav to cease hostilities in the Balkans and to point the futility of his undertaking, Ioannes I Tzimiskes allegedly threatened him in such a manner as to remind him of the fate of his father Igor, which in turn was the result of disregarding the previously concluded peace treaty with the Byzantine Empire.[1470] According to the statement of Leo the Deacon, this was a big insult for Svyatoslav, who openly threatened to conquer the city of Constantinople.[1471]

Events from recent and distant past were also used by the Byzantine government as a means of persuading potential allies, or some of its enemies with whom they shared certain interests, to achieve a certain goal which would benefit the emperor. Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos reports how the Byzantine priest Gabriel who was sent on a mission to the Magyars, tried to convince this people to attack the Pechenegs by evoking events from the recent past and emphasizing the animosity which existed towards them. He told them how "...the emperor declares that you are to go and expel the Pechenegs from their place and settle yourselves there (for in former days you used to be settled there yourselves) ...", a request which the Magyars unanimously rejected.[1472]

Another similar case can be seen in the text of the Priest of Diocleia. Although this situation appears to be a construction of the author, the events which followed point to the possibility that there is some truth in his writing. The Priest of Diocleia reports that in the diplomatic correspondence between the emperor Basileios II and Jovan Vladislav, a relative of Gavril Radomir, ruler of Samuil's State, the Byzantine emperor tried, by mentioning events from the recent past, to stir up the animosity he had with Gavril and to persuade him to try to take over his throne, which, according to Skylitzes' statement, happened soon after.[1473] The idea was to shatter the internal cohesion in Samuil's State

[1468] Nicholas, *Letters*, 10.30-45. Also, Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 93.
[1469] Angelov, *Srednovekovnata bălgarska diplomaciia*, 154-158.
[1470] *Leo the Deacon*, 156. See also Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 96.
[1471] For Svyatoslav's reaction, see *Leo the Deacon*, 157.
[1472] *DAI*, 8.25-28.
[1473] *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, 127.; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 334.

which would then result in internal unrest, thus strengthening the Byzantine position in the military campaigns, or the official negotiations, which would follow of course if it would come to that. However, this goal of Emperor Basileios II was not achieved and the war in the Balkans continued for another four years.

The historical facts could justify any attempt by the Byzantines for military intervention against the states and peoples that were living on the territory which was once part of the Roman Empire, portraying the imperial military campaign as a kind of an act of *reconquista* of regions which were in the past under the authority of their ancestors, the Romans. The mention of this political justification by Porphyrogennetos indicates that it was an integral part of Byzantine diplomatic practice in the 10th century.[1474] Also, the knowledge of recent and distant past was an extremely important diplomatic argument through which the Byzantine Empire tried to prevent or stop current or future military aggression. By evoking and emphasizing various events from the past during official negotiations, the Byzantine government, actually, tried to emphasize the ability of the state to survive, and thus to point the futility of the military endeavour to the enemy. What the imperial government wanted to accentuate with this historical propaganda, not only to the Balkan and northern peoples, but also to all others, was that the city of Constantinople was under God's protection[1475] and that any unjust activity or aggression conducted against an Empire which was superior to any other political power on Earth would result in divine wrath against the perpetrators of these acts.

Another diplomatic argument which the Byzantines used to justify their military and political activities was by highlighting the antiquity of their own state. For this purpose, the Byzantine government indicated the connection it had with some events from the distant past, such as the baptism of Emperor Constantine the Great, the founding of Constantinople and transfer of the imperial seat of the Roman Empire to the new capital on the shores of Bosporus. Liudprand of Cremona notes this Byzantine diplomatic practice very clearly when, during his second mission to Constantinople, Byzantine officials pointed out the transfer of imperial authority from Rome to this city.[1476] This evocation of the past and frequent mentioning by the imperial government of the connection which the state had with the Roman heritage allowed the Empire to maintain not only its high position in international relations, but also to emphasize the political and ideological

[1474] The emphasis in *DAI*, 31.26-30, 31.58-60, 32.21-29, that the lands of the Croats and Serbian tribes where once part of the Byzantine dominions is evidence of this manner of justifying and ideologically supporting the Byzantine military and political claims.

[1475] The mention by Nicholas, *Letters*, 10.36-37, of the Virgin's intervention during the Avar siege is one such evidence.

[1476] About the incident that happened in 968 see *Liudprand of Cremona*, 270. Also, Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 92.

supremacy of the Byzantine emperor over other rulers. How great were the benefits of connecting one's own political authority with the ancient Roman Empire can be noticed among the Rus, who, although had no direct contact with it and were not fully familiar with the implications for hegemony arising from the Roman heritage, nevertheless they were familiar with the meaning and importance of maintaining close political ties with the emperor who resided in "Tzargrad". In fact, the reputation which derived from the ancient origins was of utmost importance in the international relations and was highly respected by the elites of newly formed states in the Middle Ages.[1477] One such example where the importance of the Roman origin is easily discernible is the Byzantine adaptation of the title of basileus by adding the term "of the Romans", a denominator meant to signal that the sovereign in Constantinople and his subjects were the true "Romans", a procedure undertaken after Charlemagne was bestowed with imperial crown from the pope of Rome.[1478] In the same manner, through connection with the Roman heritage and the character of one of the emperors, Constantine the Great, the Byzantine government found legal support and legitimacy for rejection of the various political demands put forth by the rulers of the states and peoples from the west and north.[1479]

Unlike historical arguments, religious arguments did not have an opportunity to be applied in an identical manner against every enemy during official negotiations. These arguments could mainly present a strong legitimacy, or to justify a military, or political, step when the other side belonged to the same religion. Religious arguments were also used in official negotiations with a party that preached different religion, for example against the Islamic states or Khazaria, but it was mostly in the sphere of responding to criticism from other proselytizing religions towards Christianity, as well as for maintaining the prerogatives of the Byzantine emperor as its sole guardian. The best example about the use of religious arguments in official negotiations is represented in the correspondence of Patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos and Theodoros Daphnopates with Simeon. And although numerous religious arguments were presented in each of their letters, especially in those of Nikolaos Mystikos,[1480] in order to give

[1477] For the use of the past and historical events by the Byzantines in their Foreign policy see Jonathan Shepard, "Past and future in Middle Byzantine diplomacy: some preliminary observations", in *Byzance et le monde extérieur, Contacts, relations, échanges: Actes de trois séances du XX*[e] *Congrès international des Études byzantines, Paris, 19-25 août 2001*, direction de Michel Balard, Élisabeth Malamut, Jean-Michel Spieser (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2005), 171-194.; Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 91-115.; Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 240-241.

[1478] Shepard, "The Uses of 'History'", 91-92.

[1479] One such example is presented by Porphyrogennetos in *DAI*, 13.24-122, regarding the claims of the northern peoples for dynastic marriages, imperial robes, crowns and Greek fire. Similar reasons were probably presented to *Liudprand of Cremona*, 271, regarding his request for a dynastic marriage. See also Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay", 245-247.

[1480] For the patriarch's use of religious arguments, which are many in number, see in more detail in the letters

legitimacy to his rhetoric and to justify the various measures of the Byzantine government, however, the continuation of the hostilities by Simeon until his death in 927 points to the fact that these seem to have had no effect on the Bulgarian ruler.[1481]

Same as history, ethnography, presented through stories about the origins of the peoples which were named in those texts with the terms ethnos (ἔθνος), genos (γένος) and laos (λαός),[1482] known by scholars as *origo gentis*, was an integral part of the arguments used by the Byzantine envoys during official negotiations. Evidence of this practice is the manuscript *De Administrando Imperio* compiled during the reign of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos, which basically represents a kind of diplomatic and ethnographic theoretical manual intended for his successor and son Romanos II. This work is rich in myths about the origin of a number of peoples which surrounded the Byzantine Empire, such as the Iberians i.e., Spaniards,[1483] the Magyars,[1484] Pechenegs,[1485] Croats and Serbs,[1486] as well as the Romani who lived in Dalmatia before the migration of the Slavs.[1487] Myths about the origin of the Bulgarians are also presented by Nikolaos Mystikos and Leo the Deacon, which, on the other hand, differ from those put forth by Theophanes Confessor or Patriarch Nikephoros.[1488]

Yet, the question remains open whether and which of these ethnographic myths (stories that are an integral part of one's ethnic identity) found in the manuscripts of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos were accurate i.e., trustworthy to their verbal dissemination by the very people, or were imagined and created by the author, and how many of those which were accurate were actually modified to meet the needs of the Byzantine foreign policy. But regardless of their reliability, what can be noted is that these would fit well into the Byzantine diplomacy in situations which would be similar or identical to those seen in the primary sources, of course if there was a need for that, due to the fact that these ethnographic myths did not differ too much from those identity characteris-

of Nicholas, *Letters*, 5.11-16, 5.69-74, 5.159-163, 5.189-199, 8.94-105.

[1481] For the analysis of the religious arguments used by the Byzantine diplomacy and the reaction of the Bulgarian ruler see Angelov, *Srednovekovnata bălgarska diplomaciia*, 129-139. For the use of religious arguments in the diplomatic correspondence of Romanos I Lekapenos, see Daphnopates, *Correspondance*, 6.20-34.

[1482] For the use of these terms in the time of Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos see Paul Magdalino, "Constantine VII and the Historical Geography of Empire", in *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space*, eds. Sahar Bazzaz, Yota Batsaki and Dimiter Angelov, (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Hellenistic Studies, 2013), 23-41.

[1483] *DAI*, 23.2-17, 24.2-8.

[1484] Ibid, 38.3-26.

[1485] Ibid, 37.2-32.

[1486] Ibid, 30.67-78, 31.3-25, 32.2-29.

[1487] Ibid, 29.1-5, 31.10-17.

[1488] Nicholas, *Letters*, 10.33-35.; *Leo the Deacon*, 153-154. Cf. *Nikephoros*, 35-36.; *Theophanes*, 497-499. See also Todorov, "Byzantine myths", 66-68.

tics which Liudprand of Cremona informs in his *Embassy*,[1489] as well as from those found in the surviving correspondence of Byzantine diplomatic envoys.

From the manner in which they are presented, as well as from the content of the myth itself and the flow of narration, it is easy to perceive that a significant part of these *origo gentis*, if not all, actually did not reflect the true identity of the people, but were imaginary, created, most likely by the Byzantine officials for their current diplomatic needs.[1490] In fact, these presented "identities" by the Byzantines entered the field of imagology (ascription of identity characteristics and even entire characters to other peoples, societies and individuals) i.e., within what can be said that signifies some kind of differentiation of "otherness" in others in relation to one's own identity,[1491] for example the military skill of the various peoples from Western Europe versus that of the Byzantines, or the population of medieval Rome with that of Constantinople. Often these imaginary images of "others" were supported by use of history and other facts,[1492] a policy applied by the Byzantine government, for example the mentioning of the Sasanian ruler Chosroes in a certain historical context, or when describing the citizens of medieval Rome.[1493] In that direction, as a kind of imaginary identity, one should, in my opinion, see the various ethnographic myths written in *De Administrando Imperio*, although there is a probability that some of the characteristics and character traits presented in these work actually reflected the origin and identity of the peoples which were subject of the author's writing.

The reasons for the use of ethnographic myths as arguments, whether imaginary or real, by the Byzantine government in its foreign policy were multiple. First of all, these myths had the task of intimidating, irritating or annoying the foreign negotiator, and using his emotional state to their advantage, as in the case of Liudprand of Cremona.[1494] Second, the myths aimed to win over the political opponent through a specific request or statement. Thirdly and most importantly, it needed to politically support and justify the manner by which the Byzantines acted before or during negotiations, as well as to support and justify some claim or, instead, some political or military activity which they wanted to undertake, or had already undertaken. All these factors actually had a task to exert certain influence at a given moment on the other party during informal conversations or official negotiations, which would allow for the best possible positioning of the

[1489] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 246, 260, 271-272.
[1490] Todorov, "Byzantine myths", 66.
[1491] For more details see Joep Leerssen, "Imagology: History and method", in *Imagology. The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey*, ed. Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 17-32.
[1492] Leerssen, "Imagology", 28.
[1493] *Liudprand of Cremona*, 270.
[1494] Ibid, 246-247.

Byzantine envoys in achieving the political goal which was set, regardless of whether it was about typical political stalling of negotiations, signing of some armistice, truce or treaty in the near future, or something else entirely.

The implementation of all these various types of arguments in diplomacy had the same fate as the means which the Byzantines had at their disposal. But in contrast to these, the sources clearly report that history, ethnography, as well as religion, had very limited usability in diplomatic talks and negotiations, and could not independently lead to the achievement of the political and military ends that were set. A typical example is the conflict with Simeon, where although numerous historical, ethnographic and religious arguments were used in negotiations, these did not have any effect and did not help stop the hostilities. However, despite the failures, the Byzantines found these as a powerful diplomatic means through which they could not only emphasize to others the universality, antiquity and the divine approval of the imperial authority of the emperor in the former *Orbis Romanus*, but also legitimize and justify the Byzantine political and military ends.

Conclusion: Byzantine diplomacy, its "operating principles" and the policy of hegemony in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe

The relations which the Byzantine Empire established and conducted with other states, nations and tribes through a set of principles, methods, techniques, tools, assets and means, named today with the term diplomacy, was its greatest political instrument, glorified not only by the Byzantines themselves, but also by foreigners who came into contact with this state. Diplomacy, in addition to efficient bureaucracy, as well as the financial and military system, was, actually, one of the core features for the millennial survival of the Byzantine Empire on the international political scene. Unlike the other political entities from the medieval period, the Byzantine government raised this instrument of international relations to a higher level. As in the centuries before, so in the period from the middle of the 9th until the first decades of the 11th century, but even after this period, the Byzantine diplomacy was shaped by numerous internal and external factors which exerted a strong influence on its formation process, as well as on the process of its restructuring as a result of these same factors.

The first factor which had a primary impact on Byzantine diplomacy are the processes of institutionalization and ritualization which were an inseparable part of this international institution in the Middle Ages, i.e., the unwritten basic norms and laws, set of rules and conventions, which defined the appropriate behaviour and regulated relations in the informal international society of states and, fundamentally, directed its evolution and development within this regulating frame. The second was the Byzantine statecraft itself, more precisely, the level of knowledge and the art of governing the affairs of state which the emperor, his associates and other leading people in the country had and whose origins, despite the changes and development of this craft over time, should be sought in the late antique period, if not before, and formed an informal frame for practical operationality of diplomacy despite the fact that it was, actually, the personal domain of the Byzantine emperor. The third factor which shaped the Byzantine diplomacy were the political and military ends which the imperial government intended to achieve through

its state-level strategy (statecraft strategy) formed as a result of the art of skillful management of state affairs. Next was the geopolitical position of the Byzantine Empire itself which, as a result of the existence of numerous enemies at its borders who were quite able to open several military fronts simultaneously, led to an increased implementation of diplomacy in its attempt to resolve its short-term and long-term conflicts, or to achieve its political goals and military objectives. One of the factors which impacted and influenced the Byzantine diplomacy in this period of history was the idiosyncratic behaviour of the emperors of the Macedonian dynasty, who not only wholeheartedly applied it and left their personal mark, such as the use of imperial ceremonies as a diplomatic means and introduction and implementation of separate ecclesiastical ceremonies, but they also managed to bring it almost to the level of "diplomacy for diplomacy's sake".

Byzantine diplomacy between the middle of the 9th and the beginning of the 11th century represents a natural continuation of the previous centuries, mainly of the late antique period in terms of its principles, methods, tools, techniques and means, as well as in regard to the knowledge and skills which the participants possessed. The implementation of diplomacy of hospitality characterized by the protocol of friendship and the method of *impressment* practiced both towards allies and enemies continued, although against the latter, if a need occurred, in addition to the use of policy of appeasement, the method of *intimidation* was also applied where the military forces were frequently used as a tool of deterrence. The techniques of the Byzantine envoys during informal conversations and official negotiations with foreign rulers and their representatives did not differ from those employed by the envoys of the late antique period. One notices the same usage of rhetoric, theology, history, ethnography, ancient philosophy and religion. In order to highlight, accomplish or maintain the imperial political interests and ends, the Byzantine government used various diplomatic means, starting with gold and imperial aulic titles on which the Byzantine might and hegemony was based, luxury items, civilizational prestige, as well as the Christian religion, ending with historical, ethnographic and religious arguments, complemented by numerous imperial secular and ecclesiastical ceremonies established during this period.

Except for achieving its short and long-term political interests and ends, such as preserving the prerogatives of imperial power, positioning of the emperor as supreme leader and guardian of the whole Christendom, to maintain the perception of the Byzantine Empire as a medieval superpower, imposition of political hegemony, defence of the Christian *oecumene* against attacks from other proselytic religions, upholding a state of equilibrium in the surrounding regions – especially in the Pontic steppe, as well as for reintegration of once lost imperial territories, the Byzantine government also used its

diplomacy for more practical military needs. It was successfully applied to acquire military allies; to pacify part of the elite from the neighbouring countries and turn them into clients of the Byzantine emperor; for ending or preventing an incursion or military campaign; for inducing internal discord among the enemies and weakening their military ranks before a battle; for conquering a certain area, city or fortress, etc.

The process of institutionalization and ritualization which, in essence, covered the diplomacy of all states in the Middle Ages, not only of the Byzantine Empire, led to the establishment of basic norms, informal laws, set of rules and protocols. The result which emerged from these can be observed in a form of general principles of diplomatic behaviour, noted and confirmed in various sources, similar to the concept which has already been presented in the Byzantine studies as "grand strategy". These repetitive activities, measures and behaviour of Byzantine diplomacy, visible in all of its aspects, from receptions, negotiations, to ratification of peace treaties, form the basis of its "operational principles" and, unlike the aforementioned "grand strategy", some of these are written in the chapter *On Envoys* as an informal set of recommendations. Hence, it can be pointed out that the most obvious basic principles of Byzantine diplomacy are:

- Adhere to the generally accepted norms and informal laws, set of rules and protocols in international relations in regards to reception of foreign envoys as long as it is beneficial for the interests of the state. If you knowingly violate these, be sure that the justification for these inappropriate, within the diplomatic sphere, actions is sufficiently well argumented.
- Apply diplomacy of hospitality and friendship whenever possible. A good reception of diplomatic envoys always relaxes relations before the start of negotiations, creates a pleasant atmosphere for conversation, even among those who are already hostile. If the hostile attitude among those envoys is still noticeable even after this measure, together with your associates in charge of diplomatic affairs start implementing either the policy of appeasement, or carry out a gradual intimidation of the foreign envoys. Also, adhere to this rule when you send embassies abroad.
- Make a display of wealth and power in front of foreign envoys if you have enough information that this procedure will produce results. Display of wealth, as well as military equipment, leads the other to the conclusion that the country to which he is sent is extremely powerful, both from a political and military point of view. It can tip the political balance in your favour during negotiations.

- Always collect useful information about all states and peoples with whom you have already established, or intend to establish, contacts. If necessary, send a diplomat for that purpose, especially to those peoples with who you are in hostile relations, or in a military conflict. All of this information can later be used as valuable arguments during negotiations.
- The imperial envoy should represent everything that his sovereign wants others to see about him, for, basically, he is his personal representative who is personifying his image. In that accordance the envoy should be intelligent, skilled and educated, familiar with rhetoric and philosophy, a good orator, an individual trusted by the emperor, or the official who proposed him, acquainted with the situation in the country where he will be sent on a mission.
- In the presence of those to whom they are accredited, diplomatic envoys should appear gracious, truly noble, and generous within the scope of the powers granted by the emperor. Their oration and rhetoric should be presented in such a manner that they adhere to generally accepted protocol, respect the country and ruler where they are sent on a mission, and never speak disparagingly of them.
- Diplomatic envoys should perform intelligently the assignment for which they were sent, to perceive and use the opportunities offered to them, and not to apply pressure more than necessary to achieve the objective at any cost, unless they are ordered the exact opposite. Also, they should be generous during official negotiations in terms of concessions, as far as the opportunities allow, and make the best use of the gold, titles, and gifts bestowed upon them to achieve the objectives of the mission.

One of the target regions of the Byzantine foreign policy from the middle of the 9th until the beginning of the 11th century, and therefore of its diplomatic activities, was the Balkans. However, unlike Asia Minor, this region was not of great importance for the Byzantines, despite the fact that the imperial capital was located here. Only when there were no military operations on the eastern border did the Byzantine government direct its resources to the Balkans and its northern border. Geographically, the Balkan Peninsula borders the Pontic steppe, a region which during the late antiquity and the medieval period was inhabited by numerous nations and nomadic tribes which caused considerable harm to the Byzantine Empire in the past. Although there was a natural barrier, the Danube River, which represented the northern border of the Empire, the ancient "*limes Romanus*" until the first half of the 7th century, it did not prove to be an insurmountable obstacle. In fact, the Balkans was one of the more accessible regions for various groups

from the steppe region with intention to pillage and plunder, especially the terrain around the mouth of the Danube River. Even if peaceful relations were established with the Balkan polities emerging from the end of the 7th century, however, the danger could come from the regions behind them. From the middle of the 9th century, the situation in this region changed for the worse. Instead of one state in the Balkans, Bulgaria, and a distant superpower around the Caspian Sea, Khazaria, the Byzantine Empire was now facing a Bulgarian state which was on the rise and several highly aggressive and warlike nations and nomadic tribes north of the Black Sea.

Apart from the geopolitical situation, there were several other factors which could also explain the reason for the Byzantine policy of solving problems and conflicts, or achieving the political interests and ends in the Balkans, through frequent use of diplomacy. The first factor was of an economic nature. However strong the demographic and economic revival of the Byzantine Empire was, there were still three fronts in which a military conflict could start at any moment. With limited military forces which did not exceed 120,000 soldiers in total, and only about 20,000 of them stationed in the border regions of the Balkans and in the vicinity of the city of Constantinople (this number includes the army from the *themata* and from the European *tagmata*), the emperor could not intervene everywhere at the same time. The themata system was not flexible enough for simultaneous warfare on two fronts, and the political and economic interests of the Byzantine government, however, were not in the Balkans, but in Asia Minor and on its eastern border. In fact, the Balkan Peninsula was one of the poorer regions within the Byzantine Empire, both before the crisis of the late 6th and the early 7th centuries, and afterwards, and on the other hand, the fight against the "Balkan barbarians" would not bring any ideological prestige for the Byzantine emperor.

Also, direct confrontation on the battlefield did not guarantee victory, and there was always a great possibility of a catastrophic defeat. As a result of the limitation of its own resources, frontal warfare was an extremely risky move for the Byzantine Empire. An additional difficulty for conducting military campaigns in the Balkans was the extremely bad terrain configuration. Interspersed with high mountains and hilly regions, with narrow valleys, gorges and passes in between, in contrast to the broad eastern plains in Syria, any prolonged stay in the Balkan regions which were under the control of the enemy actually represented a threat for the security of the Byzantine army. In case the army had penetrated deep into enemy territory it could easily be surrounded, ambushed and utterly destroyed, or the supply lines would be cut, which would deprive it of food and other resources necessary for the successful continuation of the ongoing campaign. Victory over the enemy did not mean long-lasting peace. One or more new, more aggressive

and warlike enemies always appeared on the scene, which numerically, alone or together, exceeded the capacities of the Byzantine military forces for an effective defence of the imperial territories.

Instead, the Byzantine Empire used its political, ideological and economical advantage which was significant. Although inefficient by today's standards, the level of socio-economic development of the state and the extremely sophisticated and complex bureaucracy for the time being, according to the wealth it managed to collect and distribute, far surpassed the social systems and institutions created by other medieval states and peoples. The antiquity of the state itself and its ability to survive despite all dangers and threats through the centuries also had its influence. Another aspect which provided an advantage to the Byzantine government was Christianity, which allowed considerable political stability for the authority of the emperor and exceeded the opportunities offered by the pagan religion. All this, as well as the admiration which these nations and tribes had for the Byzantine wealth and civilization, and their easy seduction by the same, gave the Byzantine government freedom, instead of using military forces as in the case on the eastern border, to use diplomatic means in the realization of its interests and goals, achieving the same success in the end.

It is necessary to note that there was no single template, or pre-organized and agreed upon long-term plan for diplomatic action in the Balkans. The manner in which the political and military interests and ends were to be achieved depended on the personal characteristics of the power holders and their political ambitions. At first sight, the diplomatic activities were not usually initiated by the Byzantine Empire, but rather represented a kind of reaction to certain political or military events which occurred in its surroundings, although the sources point to the fact that the Byzantine government had the knowledge of creating a long-term policy directed at a specific region. The solution and the diplomatic measures used were results of the idiosyncratic decision of the enthroned emperor and his advisers, but within the framework of the skills (plans, methods, techniques, strategies, tactics, etc.) they had acquired and allowed them to successfully govern the state and to conduct its affairs, of the military and political interests and ends which the Byzantines had at that moment and in the recent past towards a certain region, state, nation and tribe, as well as of the political environment and the events which caused it.

What can be noted is that the Byzantine government had different interests and ends south and north of the Danube River. The Balkan Peninsula was once a part of the Byzantine Empire which, due to certain events in the past, was forcibly removed from its authority. Events from the middle of the 9th until the beginning of the 11th century indi-

cate that the military and diplomatic measures of the Byzantines were mostly aimed at pacifying the Balkan region and imposing Byzantine hegemony through maintaining the existing political situation, although the idea of military subjugation existed since the end of the 7th century. The reintegration of the whole of Balkans under Byzantine authority which was only temporarily carried out during the reign of Ioannes I Tzimiskes, and then firmly established by Basileios II, was more a kind of a personal assessment of the ruler, a reaction to the current situation on the ground and an obvious opportunity that could be achieved, rather than a previously planned long-term strategy.

Of all the states, principalities and nations in the Balkans, but also in the Pontic steppe as a border region with a strong influence on the peninsula, the Byzantine Empire had the most difficulties with Bulgaria. It was a centralized state with powerful military power, which, same as the Byzantine Empire, tried to expand its control over the Balkans. The struggle for hegemony which arose as a result of this situation lasted for a long period and was strongly influenced by the conditions on the eastern Byzantine border. In order to achieve the intended political ends, during this political and military conflict, the Byzantine government used various diplomatic measures as a substitute for an extensive and long-term military engagement in the Balkans, which was impossible as a result of the existing political situation, insufficient human resources in the Byzantine Empire and the difficult terrain for warfare itself. The Byzantines used gold and precious items as bribes in an attempt to win over and subdue the Bulgarians, and after their state was baptized, they passionately used their common faith to impose their own imperial ideology on them. In the moments when the relations between these two states were in crisis, or there was an ongoing conflict, the Byzantine government frequently encouraged Bulgaria's neighbours to go wage war against it through various diplomatic measures. However, it must be noted that as the only administratively organized state in the Balkans after the Byzantine Empire, with a long history of conflicts between the two, Bulgaria was well acquainted with these methods of persuasion and hardly susceptible to their influence. Bulgarians even wholeheartedly accepted the Byzantine diplomatic principles and successfully used them against the Byzantines, something that is best observed during the long reign of Simeon. Nevertheless, unable to oppose the renewed Byzantine diplomatic, economic and military power from the second half of the 9th century, Bulgaria finally succumbed and was conquered militarily in 971.

The process of restoration of the imperial control in the Adriatic region began in the 860s and represented a pragmatic combination of the political constellation in this same region and the capability of the Byzantine government for realization of its policy of reintegration. With limited military and financial resources at its disposal, and the

remoteness of the region from the Byzantine capital which made direct military pressure impossible except through an extremely expensive naval campaign, the Byzantine policy in these Balkan regions was based on conducting diplomatic measures among the Slavic principalities where the process of achieving imperial hegemony was carried out on a pragmatic ideological basis. For this purpose, the Byzantines used the same methods and means which they used with other states and peoples: baptizing their rulers and subsequently the population, the bestowment of gold and precious gifts as a means of persuasion, conferring aulic titles, as well as harbouring political contenders. Far from the centre of Byzantine cultural influence, as well as from the reach of the imperial military forces, these diplomatic means were not powerful enough for the hegemony of the Byzantine emperor to be sustained in the long run. Depending on the political interests, these Slavic principalities rejected Byzantine hegemony frequently, but also as a result of the "benevolence and generosity" of the emperor, they once more became his border (limitrophe) client states. This practice of the Byzantine government, to extend the imperial hegemony in this part of the Balkans through intensified diplomatic activities did not change even towards the end of the second decade of the 11th century when the Byzantine Empire incorporated Samuil's State within its borders with the help of military means.

In the fight against Samuil's State, the Byzantine government used a wide range of diplomatic means in addition to military forces: from alliances with neighbouring states, negotiations with leading figures in the opposing camp in order to create discord in the enemy ranks, methods of intimidation, bribes, and even generous offers of imperial aulic titles to commanders of key fortresses which came along with significant monetary allowance and prestige. The constant campaigns of the Byzantine army in the central region of Samuil's State after 999, together with the use of various diplomatic means, proved powerful enough to undermine the authority of the enemy's ruler and gradually establish among his nobles the opinion that further resistance against the Byzantines was futile. After the final submission during the second decade of the 11th century, the newly conquered territories which were previously the heartland of Samuil's State were now integrated into the Byzantine administrative system, and thus the power of the Byzantine emperor after almost four centuries returned to the interior of the Balkans, and the imperial border was once again on the Danube River.

The overall Byzantine activities, seen from a military and political aspect, in relation to the developments in the Pontic steppe was exclusively defensive. The Byzantine emperor had no ambition to impose his hegemony, or to conquer the Scythian wilderness, which was never part of the former *Orbis Romanus* i.e., the civilized world. In fact, if the sources are analysed, what can be concluded is that the goal of the Byzantine diplomacy

towards the regions north of the Black Sea was to pacify the various population who lived in these areas, to establish closer friendly and allied relations with them, and to attract and incorporate them into the Byzantine sphere of political influence. More precisely, to maintain certain level of military and political balance, to create a state of equilibrium, which in turn would allow for an increased security of imperial territories in the Balkans and the city of Constantinople not only from the Byzantine enemies in this region, but also from future raids conducted by the nations and tribes who lived north of the Black Sea during this period: the Magyars, Pechenegs and the Rus.

The diplomatic measures conducted by the Byzantine government towards the Magyars were, actually, a combination of practical, ideological and religious means, for example, bestowment of gold and precious gifts, conferring aulic titles, preparing various court ceremonies in their honour, or disseminating the Christian religion. These were supposed to neutralize the military threat to the imperial provinces in the Balkans from this new neighbour settled in the Pannonian Plain, to conclude an alliance with the Magyars for military support against others which threatened the Byzantine Empire, and if possible, to incorporate them in the Byzantine sphere of influence. Despite several diplomatic failures, during the first decades of the 11th century, the Byzantines finally achieved their intended goal. The Hungarian king became an ally of the Byzantine Empire, who helped it militarily in accomplishing the imperial policy of reintegration of the Balkan regions, and the kingdom of Hungary became at the moment an integral part of the Byzantine cultural sphere.

The Byzantine diplomacy towards the Pechenegs, despite several failures and errors, achieved significant success. They were won over as allies by the only means that fully exploited the weaknesses of their nomadic character of living (which on the other hand was the result of the social organization and economic environment of this steppe people): buying their military and political allegiance through the bestowment of significant amounts of gold and other valuables. This method allowed relations with the Pechenegs to be maintained on a friendly basis for most of the 10th century, which indicates the fact that the means used in the process achieved the desired result. They not only led to the strengthening of the Byzantine's emperor political interests north of the Black Sea and keeping his opponents from this region in constant fear and alertness of a possible attack from this steppe ally, but also led to an increase in security of his provinces, both in the Crimea and the Balkan Peninsula, and of the Byzantine capital itself.

The political relations which the Byzantine government had established with the Kievan Rus, despite the few obstacles that appeared during this diplomatic activity, can be characterized as highly successful. The contacts which were created and shaped with

their rulers allowed for the Rus to go from a potentially powerful enemy to an extremely important ally. However, this transformation was not done instantly. The great distance of Kievan Rus from the city of Constantinople was an important factor that basically weakened the assimilation power of the Byzantine civilization and culture. This allowed the prince of Rus to conduct a completely independent policy, which at times was extremely hostile to the Byzantine Empire. But this kind of relationship between the two states is more of an exception than a norm. The various means used by the Byzantines during their diplomatic activity succeeded in winning over the princes of the Rus and making them allies in the second half of the 10th century, whose military assistance was of exceptional importance not only for the security, but also to maintain the imperial power. However, despite the fact that from a political point of view the princes of Kievan Rus were *de facto* independent, as part of the Christian community, they actually accepted the Byzantine cultural sphere and believed that according to God's will the emperor and the patriarch in Constantinople had some ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Kievan Rus. On the other hand, the incorporation of this state north of the Black Sea, which exceeded their own empire in size, into the cultural sphere of the Byzantine Empire was an exceptional political success for the imperial government.

The Byzantine diplomacy was not a political tool which was used independently. Actually, its implementation should be perceived within the sphere of Byzantine statecraft and the concept of grand strategy in conjunction with the military forces. The cohesion, or interconnection, which existed between diplomacy and warfare, was created for very pragmatic reasons and as a result of the statecraft which was shaped by several factors: ideological, geopolitical and economic factors, the military tradition, as well as the idiosyncratic behaviour of the emperor. If we add to this the numerous aggressive, warlike and greedy for wealth states, nations and tribes that lived north of Constantinople, in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe, which together or individually outnumbered the imperial army, the Byzantines were convinced that the bestowal of gold and gifts, as well as the conferment of aulic titles, or their Christianization, was the most economical and safest course of action through which the Empire would thwart the hostile intentions of all these peoples and states, secure their political loyalty and achieve its long-term ends. From that point of view, diplomacy and its means were sometimes able to completely replace the activity of the Byzantine military forces on the battlefield. At the same time, this aspect of diplomacy, in fact, allowed the strengthening of the political position of the Byzantine emperor, portrayed by imperial propaganda as a noble ruler and guardian of his subjects, who won victories and achieved military objectives without shedding "Roman" blood. During this process of pacifying the enemies and neighbours from this regions

through implementation of diplomacy, in cooperation with the military forces, the Byzantine Empire succeeded, in short or long-term, to accomplish its political interests and ends in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe during the period between middle of the 9th and beginning of the 11th century, which were: preserving the prerogatives of imperial power in the international community of states, positioning the Byzantine emperor as supreme leader and guardian of the entire Christendom, to maintain the perception of the Byzantine Empire as a medieval superpower, imposition of political hegemony, upholding a state of equilibrium in the surrounding region, mainly in the Pontic steppe, forming a ring of allies and *limitrophe* client states on its borders, ensuring the security of the imperial provinces in the Balkans and reintegration of lost territories.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Anna Comnena. *The Alexiad*. Edited and translated by Elizabeth A. Dawes. London: Routledge, 1928.
- *Anastasius Bibliothecarius*. Patrologiae curcus completus, Series Latina, Tomus CXXIX. Edited by Jacques P. Migne. Paris, 1853.
- *Ante-Nicene Fathers. The Writing of the Fathers down to A.D.325*. Vol. VII, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913.
- Archdeacon Thomas of Split, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*. Editors Damir Karbić et al. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006.
- *Armenia and the Crusades. Tenth to Twelfth Centuries.The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*. Translated by Ara E. Dostourian. Lanham: University press of America, 1993.
- *A Tenth-Century Byzantine Military Manual: The Sylloge Tacticorum*. Translated by Georgios Chatzelis and Jonathan Harris. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017.
- *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum VI*. Edited and translated by Michael Jan de Groeje. E. J. Brill, 1889.
- *Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis). The Ancient Biographies of First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715, Revised edition*. Edited and translated by Raymond Davis. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010.
- Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- *Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD*. Translated by Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989.
- *Chronographiae Quae Theophanis Continuati. Nomine Fertur Liber Quo. Vita Basilii Imperatoris Amplectitur*. Edited by Ihor Ševcenko. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011.
- *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati. Nomine fertur Libri I-IV*. Translated by Michael Featherstone and Juan S. Codoñer. Boston/Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015.
- *Collectio Librorum Juris Graeco-Romani Ineditorum: Ecloga Leonis Et Constantini, Epanagoge Basilii Leonis Et Alexandri*. Edidit Carolus Eduardus Zachariae a Lingenthal. Lipsiae: Sumtibus J. A. Barthii, 1852.
- Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*. Edited by Gyula Moravcsik and

translated by Romilly J. H. Jenkins. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967.
- Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio, Vol. II, Commentary*. Edited by Romilly H. J. Jenkins. London: The Athlone Press, 1962.
- Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*. Edited and translated by John. F. Haldon. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990.
- Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies*. Translated by Ann Moffatt and Maxeme Tall. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- *Constantinople in the Eight Century: the Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*. Edited and translated by Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin. Leiden: Brill, 1984.
- *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen*. Edited by Johannes Koder. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1991.
- *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*. Einführung, edition und indices von George T. Dennis. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981.
- *Documenta historiae Choaticae periodum antiquam illustrantia*, edited by Franjo Rački. Zagreb, 1877.
- *Dokumenti za borbata na makedonskiot narod za samostojnost i za nacionalna država* Tom prvi, ured. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski. Skopje: Kultura, 1981.
- *Eusebius' Life of Constantine*. Translated by Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.
- *Fontes Byzantini Historiam Populorum Jugoslaviae Spectantes* Tomus I. Recensente Georgio Ostrogorsky. Beograd: Academia Scientarum Serbica, 1955.
- *Fontes Byzantini Historiam Populorum Jugoslaviae Spectantes* Tomus II. Recensente Georgio Ostrogorsky. Beograd: Academia Scientarum Serbica, 1958.
- *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae* Tomus IV. Editerund Ivan Dujčev, Mihail Vojnov et al. Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1961.
- *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae* Tomus V. Editerund Ivan Dujčev et al. Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1964.
- *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae* Tomus VI. Editerund Vasilka Tărpkova, Mihail Vojnov et al. Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1964.
- *Fontes Latini Historiae Bulgaricae* Tomus II. Editerund Ivan Dujčev, Mihail Vojnov et al. Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1960.
- Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*. Translated by Anthony Kaldellis. Canberra: AABS, 1998.
- Hudūd al-ʿĀlam, *The Regions of the World. A Persian Geography 372 A.H.–982 A.D*. Translated by Vladimir Minorsky. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937.
- Ioannis Zonarae, *Epitome Historiarum* Vol. IV. ed. Ludovicus Dindorfius. Leipzig, 1871.
- Iordan Ivanov, *Bălgarski starini iz Makedonia*. Sofia: BAS, 1970.
- Isocrates, *To Demonicus. To Nicocles. Nicocles or the Cyprians. Panegyricus. To Philip. Ar-*

chidamus. Translated by George Norlin. London: William Heinemann LTD, 1928.
- John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811-1057*. Translated by John Wortley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Justinian, *Corpus Iuris Civilis, Vol. I, Institutiones et Digesta*. Edited by Theodor Mommsen and Paul Krüger. Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1889.
- *Le Liber pontificalis vol.2*. Edited by Louis M. O. Duchesne. Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1892.
- Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia ed*. Immanuelis Bekkeri Bonnae, 1862.
- *Léon Choerosphactès, Magistre, Proconsul et Patrice. Biographie–Correspondance*. texte et traduction George Kolias. Athen: Byzantinisch – Neugriechische Jahrbuecher, 1939.
- *Leonis, Romanorum Imperatoris Augusti, cognomine Sapietis, opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia*. Patrologiae curcus completus, Series Graeca, Tomus LXVI. Edited by Jacques P. Migne. Paris, 1863.
- *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*. Predgovor, propratne tekstove i prevod Slavko Mijušković. Beograd: Prosveta, 1988.
- *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*. Herausgegeben von Diether Roderich Reinsch. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014.
- *Mirror for the Muslim Prince. Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*. Edited by Mehrzad Boroujerdi. Siracuse: Siracuse University Press, 2013.
- Nicetas David, *The Life of Patriarch Ignatius*. Translated by Andrew Smithies. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2013.
- Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letters*. Edited and translated by Leendert G. Westerink and Romilly J. H. Jenkins. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1973.
- Nicolas Oikonomides, *Les Listes De Préséance Byzantines des IX et XI Siécles*. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1972.
- *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople. Short History*. Translated by Cyril Mango. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990.
- *Origen: Contra Celsum*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953.
- Otto Seeck, *Notitia Dignitatum accedunt Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae Laterculi Prouinciaru*m. Berlin: Pud Weidmannos, 1876.
- *Panonski legendi*. Prevod Radmila Ugrinova-Skalovska. Skopje: Misla, 1969.
- *Photii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani epistulae et amphilochia Vol.1*. edited by Basileios Laourdas and Leendert G. Westerink. Leipzig: Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983.
- *Photii Constantinopolitani Patriarchae*. Patrologiae curcus completus, Series Graeca, Tomus CII. ed. Jacques P. Migne. Paris, 1900.
- Procopius, *History of the Wars. Gothic War*. Translated by Henry B. Dewing. London: William Heinemann, 1919.
- Procopius, *Buildings*. Translated by Henry B. Dewing. London / Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard

University Press, 1940.
- Saint Basile, *Lettres*, vol.2. Edited by Yves Courtonne. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1961.
- *Soveti i Raskazi od Kekavmen*. Prevod Jovan Belčovski. Skopje: Makedonika litera, 2015.
- *Synesii, Theodori Mopsuesteni, Arsenii*. Patrologiae curcus completus, Series Graeca, Tomus LXVI. Edited by Jacques P. Migne. Paris, 1859.
- *Tertullian. Vol. 1. Apologetic and Practical Treatises*. Translated by Charles Dodgson. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1842.
- *The Amarna letters*. Edited and translated by William L. Moran. Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyar al-Muluk or Siyasat-nama of Nizam al-Mulk*. Translated by Hubert Darke. London: Routledge, 2002.
- *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*. Translated by Robert H. Charles. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1916.
- *The Chronicle of John of Malalas*. Translated by Elisabeth Jeffreys et al. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor, Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*. Translated by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*. Translated by Paolo Squartiti. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
- *The Correspondence of Leo, Metropolitan of Synada and Syncellus*. Translated and commentary by Martha Pollard Vinson. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985.
- *The History of Menander the Guardsma*n. Edited and translated by Roger C. Blockley. Liverpool: Francis Cairns Ltd, 1985.
- *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*. Translated by Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- *The History of Leo the Deacon. Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*. Translated by Alice-Mary Talbot and Dennis F. Sullivan. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2005.
- *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*. Translated by Cyril Mango. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958.
- *The Life of Saint Nikon*. Translated by Dennis F. Sullivan. Brookline: Hellenic College Press, 1987.
- *The Lost History of Peter the Patrician. An account of Rome's Imperial Past from the Age of Justinian*. Translated by Thomas M. Banchich. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015.
- *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*. Translated by Donald S. Richards. Burlington. Vt.: Ashgate, 2002.
- *The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian text*. Edited and translated by Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor. Cambridge Mass.: The Medieval Academy of America, 1953.
- *The Taktika of Leo VI*. Edited and translated by George T. Dennis. Washington D.C.: Dumbar-

ton Oaks, 2010.
- *The Universal History of Step'anos Tarōnec'i*. Introduction, translation and commentary by Tim Greenwood. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- *Theodore Anagnostes*. Kirschengeschichte. Herausgeben Gunter C. Hansen. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag GmbH., 1971.
- Théodore Daphnopates, *Correspondanc*e. Edited and translated by Jean Darrouzes and Leendert G. Westerink. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1978.
- Theophylacte D'Achrida. *Discours, Traites, Poesies*. Edited by Paul Gautier. Tesalonique: Assosiation de Recherches Byzantines, 1980.
- *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*. ed. Immanuelis Bekker. Bonnae, 1838.
- *Theophylacti Bulgariae Archiepiscopi*. Patrologiae curcus completus, Series Graeca, Tomus CXXVI. Edited by Jacques P. Migne. Paris, 1864.
- *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*. Edited and translated by George T. Dennis. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985.
- *Three Political Voices from the Age of Justinian. Agapetus, Advice to the Emperor. Dialogue on Political Science. Paul the Silentiary, Description of Hagia Sophia*. Translated by Peter N. Bell. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009.
- *Vita S. Lucae Junioris*. Patrologia Graeca, Tomus CXI. Edited by Jacques P. Migne. Paris 1856.

Secondary Literature

- *Actes du XII Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines, Ochride 10-16 Septembre 1963, Tome I*. Nendeln: Klaus Reprint, 1978.
- Ahrweiler, Hélène. *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975.
- Alexander, Paul. "The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes." *In The Expansion of Orthodox Europe: Byzantium, the Balkans and Russia*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.
- Alexandrov, Emil. "The Bulgarian-Byzantine treaty of 927 (International law analysis)." *Bulgarian Historical Review* 21, no.1 (1993), 34-53.
- Ančić, Mladen. "The Waning of the Empire: The Disintegration of Byzantine rule on the Eastern Adriatic in the 9th century." *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 4 (1998), 15-24.
- Angelov, Petăr. *Bălgarskata Srednovekovna diplomaciia*. Sofia: Dărzhavno izdatelstvo "Nauka i Izkustvo", 1988.
- Angelov, Petăr. *Srednovekovnata bălgarska diplomaciia*. Sofia: Paradigma, 2011.
- Angelov, Petăr. "Car Samuil v predstavite na Vizantiicite." In *Evropeiskiiat iugoiztok prez*

vtorata polovina na X – nachaloto na XI vek. Istoriia i kultura, Mezhdunarodna konferenciia Sofia, 6-8 oktomvri 2014 g. Săstavili Vasil Giuzelev, Georgi N. Nikolov. Sofia: 2015.
- Antoljak, Stjepan. *Samoilovata država*. Skopje: INI, 1969.
- Antoljak, Stjepan. *Srednovekovna Makedonija* Tom I. Skopje: Misla, 1985.
- Antonopoulos, T. Panayotis. "Byzantium, The Magyar Raids and Their Consequences." *Byzantinoslavica* 54 (1993), 254-267.
- Antonopoulos, Panagiotis. "Byzantine diplomacy before 1000 AD." *Journal of East Central Europe* 26, no.2 (1999), 1-13.
- Avramea, Anna. "Land and Sea Communications, Fourth-Fifteenth Centuries." In *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century.* Edited by Angeliki E. Laiou. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002.
- Bakay, Kornél. "Hungary." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. III c.900-c.1024*. Edited by Timothy Reuter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Baldovin, S. John. *The Urban Character of Christian Worship. The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy.* Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1987.
- Baldwin, A. David. *Economic Statecraft. New Edition.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.
- Ball, L. Jennifer. *Byzantine dress: representations of secular dress in eight to twelve centuries painting*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Barnes, D. Timothy. "Synesius in Constantinople." *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 27, no.1 (1986), 93-112.
- Baynes, H. Norman. "Eusebius and the Christian Empire." In *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974.
- Baynes, H. Norman. "The Supernatural defenders of Constantinople." In *Byzantine Studies and other Essays*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1955.
- Beihammer, Alexander. "Strategies of Diplomacy and Ambassadors in Byzantine-muslim Relations on the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries." In *Ambassadeurs et ambassades: au cœur des relation diplomatiques: Rome-Occident médiéval-Byzance: VIIIe s. avant J.-C.-XIIe s. après J.-C.*. Edited by Audrey Becker and Nicolas Drocourt. Metz: Universite de Lorraine, 2012.
- Beihammer, Alexander. "Epistolography and Diplomatics." In *A Companion to Byzantine Epistolography.* Edited by Alexander Riehle. Leiden: Brill, 2020.
- Berger, Albrecht. "Imperial and ecclesiastical processions in Constantinople." In *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*. Edited by Nevra Necipoğlu. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Berridge, R. Geoff. "Amarna Diplomacy: A Full-fledged Diplomatic System?" In *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginning of International Relations.* Edited by Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook. Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.
- Black, Jeremy. *A History of Diplomacy*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2010.

- Black, Jeremy. "Diplomatic history. A new appraisal." In *Routledge Handbook of Diplomacy and Statecraft*. Edited by B.J.C. McKerneh, Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.
- Blockley, C. Roger. "Subsidies and Diplomacy: Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity." *Phoenix* 39, no.1 (1985), 62-74.
- Blöndal, Sigfús. *The Varangians of Byzantium. An Aspect of Byzantine Military History*. Translated, revisioned and rewritten by Benedict S. Benedikt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Boak, R. E. Arthur. *The Master of the Offices in the Later Roman and Byzantine Empires*. London: The Macmillan Co., 1919.
- Bohrnová, Coufalová Hana. "Mirrors for Princes: Genuine Byzantine Genre or Academic Construct?". *Graeco-Latina Brunensi*a 22, no.1 (2017), 6-16.
- Bollók, Ádám. "Byzantine missions among the Magyars during the later 10th Century?". In *Rome, Constantinople and Newly-Converted Europe. Archaeological and Historical Evidence*. Edited by M. Salamon, M. Wołoszyn et al., U ŹRÓDEŁ EUROPY ŚRODKOWO-WSCHOIDNEJ/FRÜHZEIT OSTMITTELEUROPAS 1,2. Kraków-Leipzig-Rzeszów-Warszawa, 2012.
- Boškoski, Milan. *Velikanite na makedonskiot sreden vek*. Skopje: Makedonska reč, 2007.
- Bourbouhakis, C. Emmanuel. "Rhetoric and Performance." In *The Byzantine World*. Edited by Paul Stephenson. London/New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Bozhilov, Ivan, i Vasil Giuzelev. *Istoriia na srednovekovna Bălgariia VII–XIV vek*, Tom I. Sofia: Anubis, 1999.
- Bozhilov, Ivan. Car Simeon Veliki (893-927): *Zlatniiat vek na Srednovekovna Bălgariia*. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Otecestveniia Front, 1983.
- Bozhilov, Ivan. *Vizantiiskiiat Sviat*. Sofia: Anubis, 2008.
- Brandes, Wolfram. "Die 'Familie der Konige' im Mittelalter. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zur Kritik eines vermeintlichen Erkenntnismodells." *Rechtsgeschichte* 21 (2013), 262-284.
- Brubaker, D. Jeffrey. "*"The end followed in no long time": Byzantine Diplomacy and the Decline in relations with the West from 962 to 1204."* M.A. Thesis, The University of Arlington, 2009.
- Budak, Neven. *Prva Stoljeća Hrvatske*. Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1994.
- Budak, Neven. "Croatia and Byzantium in the Tenth century. A Latin Member of the Byzantine Commonwealth." In *Center, Province and Periphery in the Age of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos: From De Ceremoniis to De Administrando Imperio*. Edited by Niels Gaul, Volker Menze and Csanád Bálint. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz GMBH & Co.KG, 2018.
- Budak, Neven. "Croats between Franks and Byzantium." *Hortus artium medievalium* 3 (1997), 15-22.
- Bury, B. John. "The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogonnetos." *The English Historical Review* 22, no.86 (1907), 209-227.
- Bury, B. John. "The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogonnetos (Continued)." *The*

English Historical Review 22, no.87 (1907), 417-439.
- Bury, B. John. *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century: With a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos*. London: Oxford University Press, 1911.
- Brennan, C. Terry. "Embassies gone wrong: Roman diplomacy in the Constantinian Excerpta de legationibus." In *Diplomats and Diplomacy in the Roman World*. Edited by Claude Eilers. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Browning, Robert. *Byzantium and Bulgaria: A comparative study across the early medieval frontier*. London: Temple Smith, 1975.
- Brubaker, Leslie, and John F. Haldon. *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c.650-850: a History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Burton, W. John. *Systems, States, Diplomacy and Rules.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.
- Cameron, Averil. "The Virgins Robe: An Episode in the History of Early Seventh-Century Constantinople." *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 42-56.
- Cameron, Averil. *The Byzantines*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- Cameron, Averil. "The construction of court ritual: the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies." In Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*. Edited by David Cannadine and Simon Price. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Canard, Marius. "Les relations politiques et sociales entre Byzance et les Arabes." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964), 33-56.
- Carile, Antonio. "Political theology in Byzantium as seen by 20th century historians." *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage* 7 (2007), 53-85.
- Chrysos, Evangelos. "Byzantium between East and West: Opponents and Allies." In *Heaven and Earth, Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections*. Edited by Anastasia Drandaki, Demetra Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Anastasia Tourta. Athens, 2013.
- Chrysos, Evangelos. "Byzantine diplomacy A.D. 300-800: means and ends." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992.
- Ciggaar, N. Krijnie. *Western Travellers to Constantinople. The West and Byzantium, 962-1204: Cultural and Political Relations.* Leiden: Brill, 1996.
- Cohen, Raymond. "Putting Diplomatic Studies on the Map," *Diplomatic Studies Programme Newsletter*. Leicester University, 4 May 1998.
- Cohen, Raymond. "Reflections on the New Global Diplomacy: Statecraft 2500BC to 2000AD." In *Innovation in diplomatic practice*. Edited by Jan Melissen. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999.
- Collins, Randall. "Civilizations as a Zones of Prestige and Social Contact." In *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis*. Edited by Saïd Amir Arjomand and Edward A. Tiryakian. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004.

- Constantelos, J. Demetrios. "The Conversion of Russia to Christianity in the Light of Greek Missionary Activity Among the Slavs." *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 33, no.4 (1988), 363-385.
- Cormack, Robin. "But is it Art?" In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992, 203-234
- Croke, Brian. "Reinventing Constantinople: Theodosius I's imprint on the imperial city." In *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians. Later Roman History and Culture, 284-450 CE*. Edited by Scott McGill, Cristiana Sogno and Edward Watts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Curta, Florin. *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages 500-1200*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Curta, Florin. *Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages (500-1300)*. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Curta, Florin. "The Image and Archaeology of the Pechenegs." *Banatica* 23, 2013.
- Cutler, Antony. "Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001), 247-278.
- Cutler, Antony. "Significant Gifts: Patterns of Exchange in Late Antique, Byzantine, and Early Islamic Diplomacy." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no.1 (2008), 79-101.
- Dagron, Gilbert. *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*. Translated by Jean Birrell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Darling, T. Linda. "Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability." In *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*. Edited by Albrecht Classen. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2013.
- Dennis, George T. "Defenders of the Christian People." In *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*. Edited by Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001.
- Dennis, T. George. "Imperial Panegyric: Rhetoric and Reality." In *Byzantine Court Culture from 829-1204*. Edited by Henry Maguire. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997.
- Derian, Der James. "Mediating Estrangement: A Theory for Diplomacy." *Review of International Studies* 13 (1987), 91-110.
- Diehl, Charles. *Byzantium: Greatness and Decline*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957.
- Dölger, Franz und Johannes Karayannopoulos. *Byzantinische Urkunderlehre. I. Die Kaiserurkunden*. München: C. H. Beck'ScheVerlagsbuchhandlung, 1968.
- Drocourt, Nicolas. *Diplomatie sur le Bosphore - Les ambassadeurs étrangers dans l'empire byzantin des années 640 à 1204*. Leuven: Peeters, 2015.
- Drocourt, Nicolas. "Les animaux comme cadeaux d'ambassade entre Byzance et ses voi-

sins (*VII-XII* siècle)." In *Byzance et ses périphéries. Hommage à Alain Ducellier*. Édité par Bernard Doumerc et Christophe Picard. Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Midi, 2004.

- Drocourt, Nicolas. "Christian-Muslim relations. An overview of the main sources and themes of encounter (600-1000)." In *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History. Vol.2* (900-1050). Edited by David Thomas and Alexander Mallet. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Drocourt, Nicolas. "Passing on Political Information between Major Powers: The Key Role of Ambassadors between Byzantium and some of its Neighbours." *Al-Masāq* 24, no.1 (2012), 91-112.
- Drocourt, Nicolas. "La mort de l'ambassadeur. Faits, causes, enjeux (7e–12e siècles)." *Revue de études byzantines* 71 (2013), 67-104.
- Drocourt, Nicolas. "Au nez et à la barbe de l'ambassadeur. Cheveux, poils et pilosité dans les contacts diplomatiques entre Byzance et l'Occident (VIe-XIIe s.)." In *Byzanz und das Abendland IV. Studia Byzantino-Occidentalia*. Herausgeben Erika Juhász. Budapest: Eötvös-József-Collegium, 2016.
- Drocourt, Nicolas. "Ambassadors as Informants and Cultural Brokers between Byzantium and the West (8th to 12th Centuries)." In *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge. Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen 2: Menschen und Worte*. Herausgeben Falko Daim et al. Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2018.
- Dvornik, Francis. *Origins of Intelligence Services*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974.
- Dvornik, Francis. "The Significance of the missions of Cyril and Methodius." *Slavic Review* 23, no.2 (1964), 195-211.
- Duczko, Wladyslaw. *Viking Rus: Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- Dujčev, Ivan. "Une ambassade byzantine auprès des Serbes au IX^{e} siècle". *Recueil de Travaux de l'Institut d'Etudes Byzantines* 7 (1961), 53-60.
- Durak, Koray. "Diplomacy as performance: Power Politics and Resistance between the Byzantine and the Early Medieval Islamic Courts." In *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, Istanbul, 21-23 June 2010*. Edited by Ayla Ödekan. Nevra Necipoğlu et al. Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2013.
- Dzino, Daniel. "'Becoming Slav, 'Becoming Croat': New Approaches in research of identities in post-Roman Illyricum." *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 14 (2008), 195-206.
- Dzino, Daniel. *Becoming Slav, becoming Croat. Identity Transformations in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia*. Leiden: Brill NV, 2010.
- Džino, Daniel, "Between migrations and origo gentis: Population movements." In *The*

Routledge Handbook of East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1300. Edited by Florin Curta. London/New York: Routledge, 2022.
- Eck, Werner. "Diplomacy as part of the Administrative Process in the Roman Empire." In *Diplomats and Diplomacy in the Roman World*. Edited by Claude Eilers. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Evans, A. James. *The Emperor Justinian and the Byzantine Empire*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2005.
- Falkenhausen, Vera von. "Between two empires: Byzantine Italy in the reign of Basil II." in *Byzantium in the year 1000*. Edited by Paul Magdalino. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003.
- Featherstone, Michael. "Space and Ceremony in the Great Palace of Constantinople under the Macedonian emperors." In *Le Corti Nell'alto Medioevo, Spoleto 24-29 aprile 2014*. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo, 2015.
- Featherstone, Jeffrey. "Ol'ga's Visit to Constantinople." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14, № ¾ (1990), 293-312.
- Featherstone, M. Jeffrey. "The Great Palace as Reflected in De Ceremoniis." In *Visualisirungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen - Gestalt und Zeremoniell.* Edited by Franz Alto Bauer. Istanbul: Ege Yayinlari/German Institute of Archaeology, 2006.
- Ferjančić, Božidar. "Vasilije I i obnova vizantijske vlasti u IX veku". *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 36 (1997), 9-29.
- Ferluga, Jadran. *Vizantiska uprava u Dalmaciji*. Beograd: SAN, 1957.
- Ferluga, Jadran. "Vizantisko carstvo i južnoslovenske države IX-X veka." *Zbornik radova vizantološkog instituta* 13 (1971), 75-105.
- Fine Jr., V. A. John. *The Early Medieval Balkans – A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983.
- Fossella, Jason. *The dromos and Byzantine Communications, Diplomacy, Bureaucracy*, 518-1204. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2023.
- Franklin, Simon and Jonathan Shepard. *The Emergence of Rus 750-1200*. Harlow: Longman Group Limited, 1996.
- Freedman, Lawrence. *Strategy. A History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Freeman Jr., W. Charles. *The Diplomat's Dictionary*. Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1993.
- Garzaniti, Marcello. "The Constantinopolitan Project of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission." In *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20th-30th November 2013*. Edited by Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos. Thessaloniki, 2015.
- Georgieva, Saška. "Diplomatic Marriages in Medieval Bulgarian Foreign Policy." *Bulgarian Historical Review* 1 (1993), 116-126.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Sprečuvajki ja bugarskata ekspanzija – vizantiskata diplomatija sprema makedonskite sklavinii vo sredinata na IX vek." *Glasnik* 56, no.1-2 (2012), 41-56.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Byzantine politics of "Sword and Letter" – The case of Samuel." *Journal*

of History 48, no.1 (2013), 65-78.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Crkovnite pretstavnici vo vizantiskata diplomatija na Balkanot vo tekot na X vek." *Glasnik* 57, no.1-2 (2013), 49-60.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Byzantine Just War and Imperial interests in the Balkans during the Tenth century." *Journal of History* 49, no.1 (2014), 125-136.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Za brakot na Samuil i Agata." In *Zbornik na trudovi od megjunarodniot simpozium "Denovi na Justinijan I – Samuilovata država i Vizantija: Istorija, legenda, tradicija i nasledstvo", Skopje 17-18 oktomvri, 2014 g.* Urednik Mitko B. Panov. Skopje: Kontura, 2015.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Zaplašuvanjeto kako diplomatsko sredstvo vo balkanskata politika na Vasilij II". In *Balkanot: Lugje, vojni i mir, Materijali od megjunarodnata naučna konferencija po povod 65 godini od osnovanjeto na Institutot za nacionalna istorija (Skopje, 4-5 noevmri, 2013)*. Urednik Dragi Gjorgiev i dr. Skopje: Institute of National History, 2015.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Diplomatskite aspekti na vizantiskoto misionerstvo." In *Četvrt megjunaroden naučen simpozium "Denovi na Justinijan I – Vizantiskoto misionerstvo i pridobivkite za Evropa", 11-12 noemvri, Skopje 2016.* Urednik Mitko B. Panov. Skopje: Evro-Balkan, 2017.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Byzantine diplomacy and Samuel's State." *Glasnik* 61, no.1 (2017), 59-72.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Pretstavata za Slovenite kako voini vo vizantiskite izvori (VI-X vek)." In *Zbornik na trudovi od Pettiot megjunaroden simpozium "Denovi na Justinijan I", Skopje, 17-18 noemvri 2017.* Urednik Mitko B. Panov. Skopje: Evro-Balkan, 2018.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Byzantine military strategy in the Balkans (976-1018)." *Glasni*k 62, no.1 (2018), 47-56.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "An Outline of Byzantine Diplomacy in the Eastern Adriatic Region (c.867-1000)." *Journal of History* 55, no.1 (2020), 21-46.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Ecclesiastical processions in Byzantine diplomacy and their impact in imperial foreign policy." In *Proceedings of the 8th International Symposium on Byzantine and Medieval Studies "Days of Justinian I", Skopje, 13-14 November, 2020*. Edited by Mitko B. Panov. Skopje: Institute of National History, 2021.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "On Byzantine Statecraft, Grand Strategy and diplomacy in the imperial centuries. Indications of Roman political heritage", in *Proceedings of the 10th International Symposium on Byzantine and Medieval Studies "Days of Justinian I", Skopje, 10-13 November, 2022.* Edited by Mitko B. Panov. Skopje: Institute of National History, 2023.
- Gjalevski, Dragan. "Strategic Planning in the Middle-Byzantine Period: A Limitrophe Policy Reintroduced?" *Studia Ceranea*, Vol.13 (2023), 29-55.
- Goffart, Walter. *Barbarian Tides. The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empir*e. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.
- Goldstein, Erik. "Developments in Protocol." *Modern Diplomacy*. Edited by Jovan Kurbalija.

Malta: Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, 1998.
- Gračanin, Hrvoje and Jana Škrgulja. "Refashioning of Historical Reality: Three stories by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and the Early Medieval history of Croatia." In *Samuel's State and Byzantium: History, Legend, Tradition, Heritage, Proceedings of the International Symposium "Days of Justinian I", Skopje, 17-18 October, 2014*. Edited by Mitko B. Panov. Skopje: Euro-Balkan University, 2015.
- Gregory, E. Timothy. *A History of Byzantium*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Greenwood, W. Timothy. "Armenian Neighbours (600-1045)." In *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500-1492*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Grabar, André. "God and the 'Family of Princes' Presided Over by the Byzantine Emperor." In *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe: Byzantium, The Balkans and Russia*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Guilland, Rodolphe. "LES LOGOTHÈTES. Etudes sur l'histoire administrative de l'Empire byzantine." *Revue des études Byzantines* 29 (1971), 5-115.
- Haldon, John and Hugh Kennedy. "The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries.". *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 19 (1980), 79-116.
- Haldon, F. John. *Byzantine Praetorians: An Administrative, Institutional and Social survey of the Opsikion and Tagmata c.580-900*. Bonn: Dr Rudolf Habelt GMBH, 1984.
- Haldon, F. John. *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The transformation of a culture. Revised edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Haldon, F. John. "'Blood and Ink': Some observations on byzantine attitudes towards warfare and diplomacy.". In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992.
- Haldon, F. John, Warfare, *State and Society in the Byzantine World 565-1204*. London: UCL Press, 1999.
- Haldon, F. John. *Byzantium at War A.D. 600-1453*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003.
- Haldon, F. John. "Social élites, wealth and power.". In *The Social History of Byzantium*. Edited by John F. Haldon. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Haldon, F. John. "Information and War: Some Comments on Defensive Strategy and Information in the Middle Byzantine Period (ca. A.D. 660-1025)." In *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*. Edited by Alexander Sarantis and Neil Christie. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Haldon, F. John. "Bureaucracies, elites and clans: the case of Byzantium ca 500–1100." In *Empires and bureaucracy in world history: from late Antiquity to the twentieth century*. Edited by Peter Crooks and Timothy H. Parsons. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Haldon, F. John. *The Empire that Would not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival 640–740*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Haldon, F. John. "'Fighting for Peace' Justifying Warfare and Violence in the Medieval East

Roman World." In *The Cambridge World History of Violence Vol.2 500-1500 C.E.*. Edited by Matthew S. Gordon et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Haldon, F. John. "Byzantium to the twelfth century." In *The Cambridge History of War. Volume II. War and the Medieval World.* Edited by Anne Curry and David A. Graff. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Hamilton, Keith and Richard Langhorne. *The Practice of Diplomacy. Its evolution, theory and administration. Second edition.* London/New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Hanak, Walter K. "The Infamuos Svjatoslav: Master of Duplicity in War and Peace." In *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honour of George T. Dennis, S.J.*. Edited by Timothy S. Miller and John Nesbitt. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995.
- Harris, Jonathan. *The Lost World of Byzantium.* New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2015.
- Havlik, Lubomir. "Constantine and Methodius in Moravia." *Sbornik Praci Filosoficke Faculty Brnēnskē University* C11 (1964), 27-50.
- Helgeland, John. "Christians and the Roman Army from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine." *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.23.1. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1979.
- Hendy, F. Michael. *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c.300-1450*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Herrin, Judith. "Constantinople, Rome and the Franks in the seventh and eight centuries." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990.* Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992.
- Herrin, Judith. Byzantium: *The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire*. London: Pinguin Books Ltd, 2007.
- Holmes, Catherine. *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976-1025)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Holmes, Catherine. "Basil II the Bulgar-Slayer and the Blinding of 15,000 Bulgarians in 1014: Mutilation and Prisoners of War in the Middle Ages." In *How Fighting Ends: A History of Surrender.* Edited by Holger Afflerbach and Hew Strachan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Holmes, Alison R. and J. Simon Rofe. *Global Diplomacy. Theories, Types and Models*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2016.
- Holsti, J. Kalevi. *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Howard-Johnston, James. "The De administrando imperio: A Re-examination of the Text and a Re-evaluation of its evidence about the Rus." In *Les centres proto-urbain russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient*. Edited by Michael Kazanski, Anne Nercessian and Constantine Zuckermann. Paris: Pierre Zech Éditeur, 2000.
- Hupchick, P. Dennis. *The Bulgarian-Byzantine wars for Early Medieval Balkan Hegemony.*

Silver-Lined Skulls and Blinded Armies. Pennsylvania: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Iljovski, Risto. "Vizantisko-Ungarski sojuz vo početokot na XI vek protiv Samoil i negovite naslednici." *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 29-30 (1991), 75-98.
- Ivanov, A. Sergey. "Religious missions." In *The Cambridge history of the Byzantine Empire c.500-1492*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Ivanov, A. Sergey. "'With the Emperors Help': An Open-handed Mission and Byzantine Diplomacy." In *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20th-30th November 2013*. Edited by Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos. Thessaloniki, 2015.
- Ivanov, Iordan. *Bălgarski starini iz Makedonia*. Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiia na naukite, 1970.
- Jeffreys, Elizabeth. "Rhetoric in Byzantium." In *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*. Edited by Ian Worthington. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007.
- Jeffreys, Elizabeth. "Rhetoric." In *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*. Edited by Elizabeth Jeffreys, John F. Haldon, and Robin Cormack. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Jenkins, H. J. Rommily. "Leo Hoerosphactes and the Saracen Vizier." In *Studies on Byzantine History on the 9th and 10th Centuries*. London: Variorum reprints, 1970.
- Jenkins, H. J. Rommily. "The Supposed Russian Attack on Constantinople in 907: Evidence of Pseudo-Symeon." *Speculum* 24, no.3 (1949), 403-406.
- Jenkins, H. J. Romilly. *Byzantium: The imperial Centuries AD 610-1071*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.
- Jordanov, Ivan. *Corpus of the Medieval Bulgarian Seals*, edited by Pavel Georgiev. Sofia: BAS, 2016.
- Jones, H. M. Arnold. *The Later Roman Empire 284-602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey Volume I*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964.
- Jöhnsson, Christer and Martin Hall. *Essence of Diplomacy*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Jönsson, Christer. "Theorising Diplomacy." In *Routledge Handbook of Diplomacy and Statecraft*. Edited by B.J.C. McKercher. Abington: Routledge, 2012.
- Kaegi Jr., Walter E. *Byzantine Military Unrest (471-843). An Interpretation*. Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert Publisher, 1981.
- Kaegi Jr., Walter E. "Some Thoughts on Byzantine Military Strategy." *The Hellenic Studies Lecture*. Brookline, Massachusetts: Hellenic College Press, 1983.
- Kaegi Jr., Walter E. "Confronting Islam: Emperors vs Caliphs (640-c.850)." In *The Cambridge history of the Byzantine Empire c.500-1492*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the*

Reception of the Classical Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. *Ethnography after Antiquity. Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. *The Byzantine Republic. People and Power in New Rome.* Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood. The Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium*. Cambridge, Mass./ London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019.
- Kaplan, A. Morton. "An Introduction to the Strategy of Statecraft." *World Politic*s 4, no.4 (1952), 548-576.
- Kazhdan, Alexandar. "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992.
- Kennedy, Hugh. "Byzantine-Arab diplomacy in the Near East from the Islamic conquests to the mid eleventh century." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March* 1990. Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1992.
- Kennedy, M. Paul. *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Kertzer, I. David. *Rituals, Politics, and Power*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Knox, Macgregor. "Conclusion: Continuity and revolution in the making of strategy." In *The Making of a strategy. Rulers, States and War*. Edited by Williamson Murray et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Koder, Johannes and Ioannis Stouraitis. "Byzantine Approaches to Warfare (6th – 12th centuries). An Introduction". In *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion. Akten des Internationalen Symposiums (Wien, 19.–21. Mai 2011)*. Edited by Johanes Koder and Ioannis Stouraitis. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012.
- Kolia-Dermitzaki, Athina. "Byzantium and the West – the West and Byzantium (Ninth-Twelfth Centuries). Focusing on Zweikeizerproblem. An Outline of Ideas and Practices." In *Aureus: Volume dedicated to professor Evangelos Chrysos*. Edited by Tachiarchis G. Kolias et al. Athens: National Research Foundation/ Institute of Historical Research, 2014.
- Komatina, Predrag. *Crkvena politika Vizantije od kraja ikonoborstva do smrtti cara Vasilija I*. Beograd: SANU, 2014.
- Komatina, Predrag. "The Church of Serbia at the Time of Cyrilo-Methodian Mission in Moravia." In *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of Slavs*. Thessaloniki, 2015.

- Komatina, Predrag. "Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio and the Byzantine Historiography of the mid-10th Century." *Zbornik radova vizantološkog instituta* 56 (2019), 39-68.
- Kosztolnyik, J. Zoltán. *Hungary under the early Árpáds, 890s to 1063*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Kotzabassi, Sofia. "Epistolography and Rhetoric." in *A Companion to Byzantine Epistolography.*, Edited by Alexander Riehle. Leiden: Brill, 2020.
- Koutrakou, Nike. "Diplomacy and Espionage: their role in Byzantine Foreign Relations, 8th-10th centuries." *Graeco-Arabica* 6 (1995), 125-144.
- Koutrakou, Nike. "Logos and Pathos between Peace and War: Rhetoric as a tool of Diplomacy in the Middle Byzantine Period." *Thesaurismata* 25 (1995), 7-20.
- Koutrakou, Nike. "'Eyes of the Emperor' and 'Real Spies'. Stories of espionage in Byzantine writings." *Leidschrift* 30, no.3 (2015), 47-64.
- Krsmanović, Bojana. *The Byzantine Province in Change (On the Threshold Between the 10th and the 11th Century)*. Belgrade/Athens: Institute for Byzantine Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2008.
- Kreutz, M. Barbara. *Before the Normans. Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.
- Kustas, L. George. "The Function and Evolution of Byzantine Rhetoric." Viator 1 (1971), 55-74.
- Laiou, E. Angeliki. "Writing the Economic History of Byzantium." In *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century.* Edited by Angeliki E. Laiou. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002.
- Laiou, E. Angeliki. "Economic and Noneconomic Exchange." In *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century.* Edited by Angeliki E. Laiou. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002.
- Laiou, E. Angeliki. "On Just War in Byzantium." In *Byzantium and the Other: Relations and Exchanges.* Edited by Angeliki E. Laiou, Cécile Morrisson, Rowan Dorin. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Lee, A. Doug. *Information and Frontiers: Roman Foreign Relations in Late Antiquity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Lee, Douglas., and Jonathan Shepard. "A Double Life: Placing the Peri Presbeon", *Byzantinoslavica* 52 (1991), 15-39.
- Leerssen, Joep. "Imagology: History and method." In *Imagology. The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey.* Edited by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
- Lemerle, Paul. *Le premier humanism byzantine*. Paris, 1971.
- Leszka, Mirosław J. "On the Reliability of Constantine Porphyrogenitus' Account of the "Flight" of Prince Časlav from Bulgaria." *Studia Ceranea* 6 (2016), 129-138.
- Letsios, Dimitrios. "War and Diplomacy between Byzantium and the Arabs during the es-

tablishment of the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus." In *International Congress on Graeco-Oriental and African studies and Colloquium East and West: Greek-Arabic relations*. Edited by Vassilios Christides. Athens: 2017.
- Leyser, Karl. "The Tenth Century in Byzantine-Western Relationship." In *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages*. Edited by Derek Baker. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973.
- Lilie, Ralph J. "Trakien" und "Thrakesion." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinisti*k, herausgegeben von Herbert Hunger, 26. Band. Wien: Der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997.
- Lissner, Freedman Rebecca. "What is Grand Strategy? Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield." *Texas National Security Review* 2, no.1 (2018), 53-73.
- Litavrin, G. Gennadii. *Vizantiia, Bolgariia, Drevniaia Rus (IX – nachalo XII v.)*. Sankt-Peterburg: Aleteiia, 2000.
- Littlewood, R. Antony. "An 'Icon of the Soul': The Byzantine Letter." *Visible Language* 10 (1976), 197-226.
- Loud, A. Graham. "Byzantium and South Italy (876-1000)." In *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500-1492*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Lounghis, C. Telemachos. *Les ambassades byzantines en Occident, depuis la foundation des états barbares jusqu' aux Croisades (407-1096)*. Athenes: Typografia, 1980.
- Lounghis, Telemachos. "Byzantine Diplomacy". *Byzantine diplomacy: A seminar*. Edited by Stelios Lampakis et al. Translated by Norman Russell. Athens: National Printing House, 2007.
- Lounghis, Telemachos. "Le Systèmes d'alliances diplomatiques byzantins successifs de 476 à 1204." In *Ambassadeurs et ambassades au cœur des relations diplomatiques, Rome-Occident medieval-Byzance (VIIIe s. avant J.-C.-XIIe s. après J.-C.)*. Édité par Audrey Becker et Nicolas Drocourt. Metz: Universite de Lorraine, 2012.
- Lowden, John. "The luxury book as a diplomatic gift." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992.
- Luttwak, N. Edward. *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*. Cambridge, Mass./London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Luttwak, N. Edward. *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire. From the First Century CE to the Third. Revised and updated edition*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University press, 2016.
- Maas, Michael. "How the Steppes became Byzantine. Rome and the Eurasian Nomads in Historical Perspective." In *Empires and exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe,* ca.250-750. Edited by Nicola di Cosmo and Michael Mass.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Macrides, Ruth. "Dynastic marriages and political kinship." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990.* Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992.
- Maguire, Henry. "The Heavenly Court." In *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*. Edited by Henry Maguire. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2004.
- Magdalino, Paul. "Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988), 193-196.
- Magdalino, Paul. "St Demetrios and Leo VI." *ByzantinoSlavica* 51, no.2 (1990), 198-201.
- Magdalino, Paul. "In search of the Byzantine courtier: Leo Choirosphaktes and Constantine Manasses." *In Byzantine Court Culture from 829-1204*. Edited by Henry Maguire. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997.
- Magdalino, Paul. "The Road to Baghdad." *In Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?*. Edited by Leslie Brubaker. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Magdalino, Paul, "Constantinople and the Outside World." In *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*. Edited by Dion C. Smithe. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000.
- Magdalino, Paul. "Byzantium = Constantinople." In *A Companion to Byzantium.* Edited by Liz James. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Magdalino, Paul. "Court and Capital in Byzantium." In *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires. A Global Perspective.* Edited by Jeroen Duindam et al. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Magdalino, Paul. "Constantine VII and the Historical Geography of Empire." In *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space.* Edited by Sahar Bazzaz, Yota Batsaki and Dimiter Angelov. Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Hellenistic Studies, 2013.
- Malamut, Elisabeth. "L'Image Byzantine des Petchénègues." *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 88 (1995), 105-147.
- Malingudi, Iana. "Russko-vizantiiskie dogovori v X v. v svete diplomatiki." *Vizantiiskii vremenik* 57 (1997), 58-87.
- Marazzi, Federico. "Byzantines and Lombards." In *A Companion to Byzantine Italy*. Edited by Salvatore Consentino. Leiden: Brill, 2021.
- Marciniak, Przemysław and Dion C. Smythe, "Introduction." In *The Reception of Byzantium in European Culture since 1500.* Edited by Przemysław Marciniak and Dion C. Smythe Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.
- Marinov, Kiril. "Kak treba da se vodiat planinski strazheniia. Preporăki v niakoi vizantiiski i antichni strategikoni." *Bulgaria Medievalis* 4-5 (2013-2014), 363-381.
- Marinov, Kiril. "Preminavaneto na planinskite prohodi spored vizantiiskite i niakoi antichni traktati za voennoto izkustvo." In *Bălgarsko srednovekovie: obshtestvo, vlast, istoriia. Sbornik v chest na prof. d-r Miliiana Kaimakamova.* Săstavili Georgi N. Niko-

lov i Angel Nikolov. Sofia: UI "Sv. Kliment Ohridski", 2013.
- Marinow, Kirił. "Mountain Warfare in the Byzantine-Bulgarian Military Struggles, the end of 10th - the beginning of 11th Century. Between theory and practice (An Outline)." In *South-Eastern Europe in the Second Half of 10th – the Beginning of the 11th Centuries: History and Culture*. Edited by Vasil Giuzelev and Georgi N. Nikolov. Sofia: BAS, 2015.
- Mateos, Juan. *Le typicon de la Grande Église, Vol.1-2.* Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1962-1963.
- Mattingly, Garrett. *Renaissance Diplomacy.* New York: Dover Publications, 1988.
- McCormick, Michael. *Eternal Victory. Triumphal rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the early medieval West*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- McCormick, Michael. "Analyzing imperial ceremonies." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 35 (1985), 1-20.
- McCormick, Michael. *Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce c.300-900.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- McCormick, Michael. "La letter diplomatique bizantien du premiere millénaire vue de l'Occident et l'énigme du papyrus de Paris." In *Byzance et le monde extérieur, Contacts, relations, échanges: Actes de trois séances du XXe Congrès international des Études byzantines, Paris, 19-25 août 2001.* Édité par Michel Balard, Élisabeth Malamut, Jean-Michel Spieser. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2005
- McGeer, Eric. *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century*. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2008.
- Mel'nikova, Elena. "Rhosia and the Rus in Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos' *De Administrando Imperio*." In *Byzantium and the Viking World*. Edited by Fedir Androshchuk et al. Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2016.
- Melissen, Jan. *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Publishers Ltd, 1999.
- Millar, Fergus. *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)*. London: Duckworth, 1977.
- Millar, Fergus. "Emperors, Frontiers and Foreign relations, 31 B.C. to 378 A.D." *Brittania* 13 (1982), 1-23.
- Miller, A. Dean. *Studies in Byzantine diplomacy: sixth to tenth centuries.* Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1963.
- Miller, A. Dean. "Byzantine Treaties and Treaty-making: 500-1025 AD." *Byzantinoslavica* 32 (1971), 56-76.
- Miller, A. Dean. "The Logothete of the Drome in the Middle Byzantine period." *Byzantion* 36 (1966), 438-468.
- Miller, A. Dean. *Imperial Constantinople*. New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1969.
- Muir jr., W. Edward. *Ritual in Early Modern Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Muthesius, Anna. "Silken diplomacy." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-*

fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990. Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992.
- Mladjov, Ian. "Bulgarians and Magyars as allies and rivals across the early medieval frontier." In *Evropeiskiiat iugoiztok prez vtorata polovina na X – nachaloto na XI vek. Istoriia i kultura, Mezhdunarodna konferenciia Sofia, 6-8 oktomvri 2014 g*. Săstavili Vasil Giuzelev, Georgi N. Nikolov (Sofia: 2015).
- Moffatt, Ann. "Variations in Byzantine Imperial Ceremonial: The De Ceremoniis of Constantine Porphyrogennetos." *Byzantinische Forschungen* 24 (1997), 219-228.
- Moravcsik, Gyula. *Byzantium and the Magyars*. Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert Publisher, 1970.
- Moravcsik, Gyula. "Byzantine Christianity and the Magyars in the Period of their Migration." *The American Slavic and East European Review* 5, no.3-4 (1946), 29-45.
- Moravcsik, Gyula. "The Role of the Byzantine Church in the Medieval Hungary." *The American Slavic and East European Review* 6, no.3-4 (1947), 134-151.
- Mullett, E. Margaret. "The language of diplomacy." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*. Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992.
- Mullett, Margaret. "Epistolography." In *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*. Edited by Elizabeth Jeffreys, John F. Haldon, and Robin Cormack. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Mullett, Margaret. *Theophylact of Ochrid. Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop*. London/New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Murray, Williamson. "Thoughts on Grand Strategy." In *The Shaping of grand Strategy. Policy, diplomacy and war*. Edited by Williamson Murray et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Murray, Williamson and Grimsley, Mark. "Introduction: On strategy." In *The Making of a strategy. Rulers, States and War*. Edited by Williamson Murray et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Mužić, Ivan. *Hrvatska povijest devetoga Stoljeća*. Split: Matica Hrvatska 2007.
- Nechaeva, Ekaterina. *Embassies-Negotiations-Gifts. System of East Roman Diplomacy in Late Antiquity*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014.
- Nechaeva, Ekatherina. "Patterns of Roman diplomacy with Iran and the Steppe people." In *Empires and exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca.250-750*. Edited by Nicola di Cosmo and Michael Mass. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Németh, András. *The Excerpta Constantiniana and the Byzantine Appropriation of the Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Nicol, M. Donald. "The Byzantine View of Western Europe." *Greek, Roman and Byzantine*

Studies 8, no.4 (1967), 315-339.
- Nicol, Donald M. *Byzantium and Venice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Nicol, Donald M. "Byzantine political thought." In *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350-c.1450.* Edited by James H. Burns. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Nikolova, Svetlina. "The Moravian Mission – A Successful and an Unsuccessful Result of the Activity of sts. Cyril and Methodius." In *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20th-30th November 2013.* Edited by Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos. Thessaloniki, 2015.
- Nicolson, Harold. *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method.* Leicester: University of Leicester, 2001.
- Noonan, S. Thomas. "European Russia, C. 500 - C. 1050." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. III c.900-c.1024.* Edited by Timothy Reuter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Noonan, S. Thomas. "Why Orthodoxy Did Not Spread among the Bulgars on the Crimea during the Early Medieval Era: An Early Byzantine Conversion Model." In *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals.* Edited by Guyda Armstrong and Ian. N. Wood. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.
- Obolensky, Dimitri. *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe, 500-1453.* New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971.
- Obolensky, Dimitry. "Ol'ga's Conversion: The Evidence Reconsidered." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12/13 (1988/1989), 145-158.
- Obolensky, Dimitry. "The Principles and Methods of Byzantine Diplomacy." In *Byzantium and the Slavs*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994.
- Oikonomides, Nicolas. "Title and Income at the Byzantine Court." In *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*. Edited by Henry Maguire. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997.
- Oikonomides, Nicolas. "The Role of the Byzantine State in the Economy." In *The Economic History of Byzantium* Vol.1. Edited by Angeliki E. Laiou. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002.
- Ostrogorsky, George. "The Byzantine emperor and the Hierarchical World Order." *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35, no.84 (1956), 1-14.
- Ostrogorsky George. "The Byzantine Empire in the World of the Seventh Century." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959), 1-21.
- Ostrogorski, Georgije. *Istorija Vizantije*. Beograd: Prosveta, 1966.
- Ostrogorski, Georgije. *Iz vizantiske istorije i prosopografije*. Beograd: Prosveta, 1968.
- Ostrogorski, Georgije. "Srpsko poslanstvo caru Vasiliju II". In *Vizantija i Sloveni.* Beograd: Prosveta, 1970.
- Ostrogorski, Georgije. "Kievska kneginja Olga i Vizantija". In *Vizantija i Sloveni*. Beograd:

Prosveta, 1970.
- Ostrogorski, Georgije. "Pohod kneza Olega na Carigrad". In *Vizantija i Sloveni*. Beograd: Prosveta, 1970.
- Ostrogorski, Georgije. "Kijevski knez Vladimir i Vizantija". In *Vizantija i Sloveni*. Beograd: Prosveta, 1970.
- Ostrogorski, Georgije. "Lav Ravduh i Lav Hirosfakt". In *Vizantija i Sloveni*. Beograd: Prosveta, 1970.
- Paloczi – Horvath, Andras. *Petchenegs, Cumans, Iasians. Steppe peoples in medieval Hungary*. Budapest: Corvina, 1989.
- Panov, Branko. *Srednovekovna Makedonija* Tom III. Skopje: Misla, 1985.
- Panov, Branko. *Istorija na makedonskiot narod*, Tom I. Skopje: INI, 2000.
- Panov, B. Mitko. "Ideološkata dimenzija na sudirot pomegju Vasilij II i Samuil." *Spektar* 57/1 (2011), 6-15.
- Panov, B. Mitko. *The Blinded State. Historiographic Debates about Samuel Cometopoulos and His State (10th-11th Century)*. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Papaioannou, Stratis. "Letter-writing." In *The Byzantine World*. Edited by Paul Stephenson. London/New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Papasotiriou, Charalambos. *Byzantine Grand Strategy*. PhD diss., Stanford University: Ann Arbor, 1992.
- Paroń, Aleksander. The Pechenegs: *Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*, translated by Thomas Anessi. Leiden: Brill, 2021.
- Pavlov, Plamen. *Vekăt na car Samuil*. Sofia: Izdatelstvo "Iztok-Zapad", 2014.
- Pertusi, Agostino. *Storiografia umanistica e mondo bisantino.* Palermo: Istituto Siciliano, 1967.
- Petkas, Alex. "The King in Words: Performance and Fictions in Synesius' De Regno." *American Journal of Philology* 139, no.1 (2018), 123-151.
- Piltz, Elisabeth. "Middle Byzantine Court Costume." *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*. Edited by Henry Maguire. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997.
- Pirivatrić, Srđan. *Samuilova država. Obim i karakter*. Beograd: Vizantološki institut SANU, 1997.
- Pirivatrić, Srđan. "The Serbs and the Overlapping Circles of Rome and Constantinople (7th to 16th Century)." In *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Belgrade, 22-27 August,* 2016. Belgrade, 2017.
- Poppe, Andrzej. "The Political Background to the Baptism of the Rus': Byzantine-Russian relations 986-989". *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976), 195-244.
- Prinzing, Günter. "Byzantine Mirrors for Princes: An Overview." In *A Critical Companion to the 'Mirrors for Princes' Literature.* Edited by Noëlle-Laetitia Perret and Stéphane Péquignot. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2023.
- Qiang, Li and Stefanos Kordosis, "The Geopolitics of the Silk Road: Resurveying the Rela-

tionship of the Western Türks with Byzantium through Their Diplomatic Communications." *Medieval Worlds* 8 (2018): 109-125.
- Róna-Tas, András. "The Khazars and the Magyars." In *The World of the Khazars: New Perspectives Selected Papers from the Jerusalem 1999 International Khazar Colloquium hosted by the Ben Zvi Institute.* Edited by Peter B. Golden, Haggai Ben-Shammai and András Rona-Tas. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
- Rosser, John. "John the Grammarian's Embassy to Baghdad and the Recall of Manuel." *Byzantoslavica* 37, no.2 (1976), 168-171.
- Rozen, Viktor R. *Imperator Vasilii Bolgaroboica. Izvlechenija iz Letopisi Iahii Antiohiiskago,* Prilozheniia k Zapiski Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk 44. St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1883.
- Różycki, Łukasz. *Battlefield Emotions in Late Antiquity. A Study of Fear and Motivation in Roman Military Treaties.* Leiden: Brill, 2021.
- Ruggie, G. John. *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization.* London: Routledge, 1998.
- Rukuni, Rugare. "Religious statecraft: Narratives of persecution and diplomacy in the case of Byzantine, Aksum and Himyar." *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no.4 (2021), 1-13.
- Runciman, Steven. *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his reign. A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium.* Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1929.
- Runciman, Steven. *Vizantijska Civilizacija.* Beograd, 1964.
- Runciman, Steven. *Byzantine Theocracy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Salamon, Maciej. "The Belasitza battle or Belasitza military operation?." In *Evropeiskiiat iugoiztok prez vtorata polovina na X – nachaloto na XI vek. Istoriia i kultura, Mezhdunarodna konferenciia Sofia, 6-8 oktomvri 2014 g.* Săstavili Vasil Giuzelev, Georgi N. Nikolov. Sofia: 2015.
- Schavelev, S. Aleksey. "Treatise De Administrando Imperio by Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus: Date of the Paris. gr. 2009 Copy, Years of Compiling of the Original Codex, and a Hypothesis about the Number of Authors." *Studia Ceranea* 9 (2019), 681-704.
- Schreiner, Peter. "Die vermeintliche blendung. Zu den ereignissen von Kleidion im jahr 1014." *In South-Eastern Europe in the Second Half of 10th – the Beginning of the 11th Centuries: History and Culture.* Edited by Vasil Gjuzelev and Georgi N. Nikolov. Sofia: BAS, 2015.
- Sevillano-Lopez, David. "Diplomacia en la ruta de la seda: Las embajadas Bizantinas a China en los Siglos VII-VIII." *Estudios byzantinos* 4 (2016), 39-65.
- Shepard, Jonathan, "Information, disinformation and delay in Byzantine diplomacy." *Byzantinische Forschungen* 10 (1985), 233-294.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Aspects of Byzantine attitudes and policy towards the west in the

tenth and eleventh centuries". In *Byzantium and the West c.850-c.1200, Proceedings of the XVIII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies.* Edited by James H. Howard-Johnston. Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 800-1204: means and ends." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990.* Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Slavs and Bulgars." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. II c. 700-c.900.* Edited by Rosamond McKitterick. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Imperial Information and Ignorance: a discrepancy." *Byzantinoslavica* 56 (1995), 107-116.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Constantinople-gateway to the north: the Russians." In *Constantinople an its hinterland, Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993.* Edited by Cyril Mango and Gilbert Dagron. Aldershot: Variorum Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1995.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Byzantium in Equilibrium, 886-944." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. III c.900-c.1024.* Edited by Timothy Reuter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Byzantium expanding 944-1025." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. III c.900-c.1024.* Edited by Timothy Reuter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Bulgaria: the other Balkan Empire." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. III c.900-c.1024.* Edited by Timothy Reuter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Spreading the word: Byzantine missions." In *The Oxford History of Byzantium.* Edited by Cyril Mango. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Soldiers, missionaries and diplomacy under Gibbon's eyes." In *Edward Gibbon and Empire.* Edited by Rosamond McKitterick and Roland Quinault. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "The Uses of 'History' in Byzantine Diplomacy: Observations and Comparisons." In *Porphyrogenita. Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides.* Edited by Charalambos Dendrinos et al. Ashgate: Aldershot, 2003.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Past and future in Middle Byzantine diplomacy: some preliminary observations." In *Byzance et le monde extérieur, Contacts, relations, échanges: Actes de trois séances du XX^e Congrès international des Études byzantines, Paris, 19-25 août 2001.* Direction de Michel Balard, Élisabeth Malamut, Jean-Michel Spieser. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2005.

- Shepard, Jonathan. "Byzantium's Overlapping Circles." In *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies Vol. I.* Edited by Elizabeth Jeffreys. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
- Shepard Jonathan. "Manners maketh Romans? Young barbarians at the emperor's court." In *Byzantine style, Religion and Civilization*. Edited by Elizabeth Jeffreys. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Introduction (i): Approaching Byzantium". In *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c.500–1492.* Edited by Jonathan Shepard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Equilibrium to expansion (886-1025)." In *The Cambridge history of the Byzantine Empire c.500-1492.* Edited by Jonathan Shepard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "The Viking Rus and Byzantium", In *The Viking world*, edited by Stefan Brink. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2008.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Orthodoxy and Northern Peoples: Goods, Gods and Guidelines." In *A Companion to Byzantium*. Edited by Liz James. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Trouble-shooters and Man-on-the-spot: The emperor's dealings with outsiders." In *Le Relazioni Internazionali Nell'alto Medioevo*. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo, 2011.
- Shepard, Jonathan. "Symeon of Bulgaria – Peacemaker." In *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe.* Edited by Jonathan Shepard. Farnham: Ashgate Variorum, 2011.
- Ševčenko, Ihor. "Three paradoxes of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission." *Slavic Review* 23, no.2 (1964), 220-236.
- Ševčenko, Ihor. "Religious Missions Seen from Byzantium." In *Harvard Ukrainian Studies XII/XIII. Proceedings of the International Congress Commemorating the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine.* Edited by Omeljan Pritsak and Ihor Ševčenko. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1988/1989.
- Ševčenko, Ihor. "Re-reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990.* Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992.
- Shlosser, Franziska E. "Weaving a Precious Web: The Use of Textiles in Diplomacy." *Byzantinoslavica* 63 (2005), 45-52.
- Silove, Nina. "Beyond the Byzzword: The Three Meanings of 'Grand Strategy'." *Security Studies* 27, no.1 (2018), 27-57.
- Simeonov, Grigori. "Topografiia i diplomaciia. Izboră na miasto za sreshtta pri bălgarovizantiiskite pregovori na visoko ravnishte prez VIII-X vek". In *Bălgarsko Carstvo. Sbornik v chest na 60-godishninata na doc. d-r Georgi N. Nikolov.* Red. Angel Nikolov.

Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2018.
- Simeonova, Liliana. "The Short Fuse: Examples of Diplomatic abuse in Byzantine and Bulgarian History." *Byzantinische Forschungen* 23 (1996), 55-74.
- Simeonova, Liliana. *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross. Photios, Bulgaria and the Papacy, 860s – 880s.* Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1998.
- Sophoulis, Panos. *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, 775-831. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- Stefoska, Irena. "Strimonskata oblast vo VI do početokot na X vek." *Glasnik* 49/1-2 (2005), 307-324.
- Steiner, H. Barry. "Diplomacy and international Theory." *Review of International Studies* 30, no.4 (2004).
- Stephenson, Paul. *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: a political study of the northern Balkans, 900-1204*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Stephenson, Paul. *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-slayer.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Stern, M. Samuel. "An embassy of the Byzantine emperor to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz." *Byzantion* 20 (1950), 239-258.
- Stouraitis, Yannis. *Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (7. – 11. Jahrhundert).* Wien: Verlag Fassbaender, 2009.
- Stouraitis, Ioannis. "Roman identity in Byzantium: a critical approach." *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 107 (2014), 175–220.
- Stouraitis, Yannis. "Introduction: Military Power in the Christian Roman Empire, ca. 300-1204." In *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300-1204*. Edited by Yannis Stouraitis. Leiden: Brill, 2018.
- Stouraitis, Yannis. "State War Ethic and Popular Views on Warfare". In *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300-1204,* ed. Yannis Stouraitis. Leiden: Brill, 2018.
- Sullivan, F. Dennis. "Byzantine fronts and Strategies c.300-1204." In *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War*. Edited by Yannis Stouraitis, Leiden: Brill, 2018.
- Swift, Louis J. "War and the Christian Conscience I: The Early Years." *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.23.1. (1979), 835-868.
- Tashjean, E. John. "On Theory of Statecraft." *The Review of Politics* 35, no.3 (1975), 375-385.
- Telea, Marius. "Mission and/or conversion: Strategies of Byzantine diplomacy." *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 6, no.3 (2015), 81-105.
- *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium Vol. 3*. Edited by Alexandar P. Kazhdan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Tinnefeld, Franz. "Ceremonies for Foreign Ambassadors at the Court of Byzantium and their Political background." *Byzantinische Forschungen* 19 (1992), 193-214.
- Todorov, A. Boris. "Byzantine myths of origins and their functions." *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 2, no.4 (2008), 64-71.
- Tolochko, P. Oleksiy. "Church of St. Elijah, 'Baptised Ruses' and the Date of the Second

Ruso-Byzantine Treaty." *Byzantinoslavica* 71, no.1-2 (2013), 111-128.
- Tomov, Tomo. "Bitkata pri Kliuch prez 1014 g." In *Evropeiskiiat iugoiztok prez vtorata polovina na X – nachaloto na XI vek. Istoriia i kultura, Mezhdunarodna konferenciia Sofia, 6-8 oktomvri 2014 g*. Săstavili Vasil Giuzelev, Georgi N. Nikolov. Sofia: 2015.
- Tougher, Shaun. *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912): Politics and People.* Brill-Leiden, 1997.
- Toynbee, Arnold J. *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Treadgold, Warren. "Notes on the Numbers and Organization of the Ninth-Century Byzantine Army." *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 21 (1980).
- Treadgold, Warren. *Byzantium and Its Army 284-1081*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Treadgold, Warren. *A History of the Byzantine State and Society.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Treadgold, Warren. "Standardized numbers in the Byzantine Army." *War in History* 12 (2005), 1-14.
- Treadgold, Warren. *The Byzantine Revival 780-842.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- Treadgold, Warren. "Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior." In *Noble Ideas and Bloody Realities. Warfare in the Middle Ages.* Edited by Niall Christie and Maya Yazigi. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- Uzelac, Aleksandar. "Prince Michael of Zahumlje – a Serbian ally of Tsar Simeon". In *Emperor Symeon's Bulgaria. In the History of Europe's Southeast: 1100 years from the battle at Achelous.* Edited by Angel Nikolov and Nikolay Kanev. Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2018.
- Vasiliev, A. Alexander. *Byzance et les Arabes, Tome I: La dynastie d'Amorium (820–867), ed. Henri Grégoire, Marius Canard.* Bruxelles: G.P. Maisonneuve, 1935.
- Vasiliev, A. Alexander. *Byzance et Arabes Tome II, la dynastie macédonienne (867-959). Extraits des Sources Arabes, ed. Henri Grégoire, Marius Canard.* Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Historie Orientales et Slaves, 1950.
- Vasiliev, A. Alexander. *Byzance et les Arabes, Tome II: Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l'époque de la dynastie macédonienne (les empereurs Basile I, Léon le Sage et Constantin VII Porphyrogénète) 867-959 (253-348). Première partie: Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l'époque de la dynastie macédonienne. Première période, de 867 à 959, ed. Henri Grégoire, Marius Canard.* Bruxelles: Fondation Byzantine, 1968.
- Vasiliev, A. Alexander. *The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946.
- Vasiliev, A. Alexander. "The Second Russian Attack on Constantinople." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 6 (1951), 165-228.
- Vavřínek, Vladimír. "Cyril and Methodius. Was there a Byzantine Missionary Program

for the Slavs?". In *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20th-30th November 2013.* Edited by Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos. Thessaloniki, 2015.
- Viscuso, Patrick. "Christian Participation in Warfare. A Byzantine view." In *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis.* Edited by Timothy S. Miller and John Nesbitt. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995.
- Vlasto, P. Alexis. *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Voinov, Mihail. "Promianata v Bălgaro-vizantiiskite otnosheniia pri car Simeon". *Izvestiia na Instituta za Istoriia* Tom 18 (1967), 147-202.
- Živković, Tibor. *Južni Sloveni pod vizantiskom vlašću 600-1025.* Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2007.
- Živković, Tibor. *De Conversione Croatorum et Serborum. A lost Source.* Belgrade: Institute of History, 2012.
- Živkovič, Tibor. "The Date of the Creation of the Theme of Peloponnese." *Byzantina Symmeikta* 13 (1999), 141-155.
- Živkovič, Tibor. "Uspenskij's Taktikon and the Theme of Dalmatia." *Byzantina Symmeikta* 17 (2005), 49-85.
- Živković, Tibor. "An Unknown Source of Constantine Porphyrogenitus." *Byzantinoslavica* 68, no.1 (2010), 129-143.
- Živković, Tibor. *De Conversione Croatorum et Serborum. A lost Source.* Belgrade: Institute of History, 2012.
- Živković, Tibor. "On the Baptism of the Serbs and Croats in the time of Basil I (867-886)." *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 2013, no.1 (2013), 33-53.
- Weller, Linden Anna. *Imagining Pre-Modern Imperialism: the Letters of Byzantine Imperial Agents Outside the Metropole*. PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2014.
- Whitby, Michael. "From frontier to palace: the personal role of emperor in diplomacy." In *Byzantine diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies,* Cambridge, March 1990. Edited by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1992.
- Whittow, Mark. *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1205.* Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996.
- Whittow, Mark. "Byzantium's Eurasian policy in the age of the Türk empire". In *Empires and exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca.250-750.* Edited by Nicola di Cosmo and Michael Mass. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Winter, F. Otto. "Klientelkonige im romishen und byzantinishen Reich." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 2 (1952), 35-50.
- Wight, Martin. *Power Politics.* Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978.

- Zhivkov, Boris. *Khazaria in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries.* Translated by Daria Manova. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
- Ziemann, Daniel. "Between Authoritarianism and Consensus: Domination and the Role of Nobility in the First Bulgarian Realm (7th-late 9th Century)." *Bulgaria Medievalis* 2 (2011), 373-397.
- Zlatarski, Vasil. *Istoriia na Bălgarskata dărzava prez srednite vekove, Tom I, Chast 2. Treto fototipno izdanie*. Sofia: Izdatelstvo "Zaharii Stoianov", 2007.
- Zukerman, Constantine. "`Les Hongrois au pays Lébédia: une nouvelle puissance aux confins de Byzance er de la Khazarie ca.836-889." In *Byzantium at war: ninth-twelfth century.* Edited by Kostas Tsiknakis. Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1997.

Index

Latin Index

agentes in rebus 200
cursus publicus 261
dispositio 217, 264
divitiae 117
dux Veneticorum et Dalmatianorum 68
eschatokollon 217
inscriptio 217
intitulatio 217
invocatio 217
legimus 217
limitrophe 51, 160, 164, 269, 280, 375
magister officiorum 11, 195, 196, 200, 201, 202, 209
magister militum 209
naratio 217
Orbis Romanus 80, 115, 142, 145, 147, 232, 268, 364, 372
origo gentis 127, 130, 362, 363
reconquista 152, 360
res publica 134
sapientia 117
scrinium barbarorum 155, 196, 202
via Egnatia 12, 249
via Militaris 17

Hellenic Index

ἄρχοντος 303
ἀποκρισιάριος 196, 207, 259
ἀποκρισιάρειον 202
ἀποστασία 61, 146
βασιλεία 134, 195, 196, 197
βασιλεύς 24, 141, 156, 196, 197
βασιλεὺς τῶν Ῥωμαίων 305
βασιλικός 196, 207
γένος 362
γράμμα 262
γράμματα 84, 95, 266, 268, 286
δημόσιος δρόμος 202
διηνεκεῖς σπονδαί 266
δουλεία 280
εἰρήνη 266
εἰρήνη σπονδαί 266
ειρήνοποιος 266
ἐκεχειρία 266
ἔξουσιαστὴς 301
ἔθος 212, 254
ἔθνος 362
έπισκεπτῆται 200
ἐπιστολή 261
ἐπιρριπτάριον 30
έρμηνευταί 200
ἡμίαργος 23

ἰσαπόστολος 141, 314
κέλευσις 266, 268, 281
κομιστές 261
κουράτωρ 202
λαός 362
λόγος 254
λογοθέσιον 196, 200
λογοθέτης τοῦ δρόμου 155, 196, 200
μαγιστριανός 208
μίμησις 133, 212
νικηφόρος 266
ξυνθήκη 266
ὁ βάρβαρος 202
πάθος 254
παιδεία 252
πάκτον 266, 282
Περὶ πρέσβεων 3, 205
Πόλις 335
Πολιτεία 134
πρεσβεα ἄπρακτος 206
πρεσβέυς 196, 206, 207
Πρόξενοι 327
Προσκύνησις 309
ῥόγα 302
σκαραμάγγιον 302
σαγίον 302
σάκρα 262
ςίμμαχοι 106
Σκλαβινίας ἑξάρχοντος 10
Σπονδή 266
στρατηγία 149
στρατός 149
στρατηγός 149
συνθῆκαι 266
τάξις 133, 146, 264
τὸ σκρίνιον τῶν βαρβάρων 202
υπήκοοι 327

Index of Personal names

A
Aaron 42, 60, 64, 65, 74
Agapetus 124, 126, 381
Agatha 42, 61, 62, 71
Ajtony 69, 90, 331
Alexandros 27, 28, 224, 243
Alexios I Komnenos 197
al-Hakim 70
al-Ma'mun 234
al-Mu'izz 131, 132, 154, 157, 199, 207, 213, 228, 231, 232, 253, 309
al-Mutawakkil 201, 309
Anastasius I 133, 341,
Anastasius Bibliotecarius 275
Andronikos Doukas 104
Anna Komnena 263
Anna, porphyrogenneta 101, 106, 107, 290, 328, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357
Arcadius 124, 125
Ardalestos Diogenes 56
Argyros 68, 89, 114
Arpad 25, 82, 86, 87, 88, 172, 284, 306, 344

B
Bardas Phokas 65, 66, 106, 177, 180, 181
Bardas Skleros 60, 63, 65, 95, 177
Basileios I 20, 22, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 55, 99, 101, 103, 125, 126, 141, 143, 146, 199, 221, 255, 279, 280, 281, 282, 285, 315, 318, 319, 328, 329, 342, 346,
Basileios II 5, 53, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 89, 90, 106, 107, 138, 146, 159, 171, 178, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 186, 188, 189, 190, 197, 199, 200, 248, 249, 250, 263, 270, 290, 306, 307, 308, 328, 331, 333, 354, 355, 356, 357, 359,360, 371
Bertha 354
Bogdan 74
Boris 5, 8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 41, 43, 44, 49, 51, 59, 60, 61, 62, 71, 79, 125, 126, 130, 146, 163, 176, 177, 178, 184, 185, 223, 228, 238, 256, 257, 273, 274, 275, 278, 283, 298, 316, 321, 322, 323, 324, 326, 327, 356
Boris II 44, 59, 60, 61, 146, 356
Bruno of Querfurt 331
Bulcsu 87, 88, 284, 301, 308, 329, 344, 348, 350

C
Carl von Clausewitz 165, 377
Charlemagne 3, 115, 140, 156, 268, 305, 354, 361
Chryselios 42, 71, 249
Constantine-Cyril 3, 18, 141, 275, 320
Constantine the Great 110, 119, 134, 141, 219, 313, 335, 360, 361

D
David, kouropalates 73, 183,
Diocletian 139, 252
Dobromir 70, 250, 307
Domagoj 52
Dom Jean Mabillon 110
Donatus 343, 348
Dragomouz 74
Držislav 56

E
Eusebius of Caesarea 133, 219, 313
Eustathios 26

G
Gabriel 83, 84, 143, 176, 210, 251, 329, 359
Gavril Radomir 69, 73, 74, 89, 178, 182, 250, 263, 359
Genesios 16, 19, 256, 273, 378
Georgi Soursouboul 38
Georgius Monachus Continuatus 19, 20
Gibbon 109, 128, 401
Giovanni Orseolo 67, 68
Godfrey of Viterbo 124
Gojnik 53, 328
Grot 347

H
Hadrian II 348
Harun ibn-Yahya 345, 347
Herakleios 45, 221, 228, 343,
Hincmar 20, 323
Homer 1, 125
Hugo 311, 354

I
Ibn Khurdadbeh 97
Ignatios 20, 99, 179, 180, 274, 275
Igor 95, 100, 103, 104, 106, 175, 270, 288, 289, 297, 359
Ioannes Bogas 32, 209, 210, 244, 245
Ioannes Grammatikos 234, 237, 252
Ioannes Mystikos 237, 253
Ioannes I Tzimiskes 44, 56, 59, 60, 61, 96, 145, 146, 172, 173, 184, 188, 189, 199, 289, 342, 353, 354, 359, 371
Isaakios I Komnenos 120, 294
Isbul 14
Isocrates 123

J
John X, the pope 55, 346, 348
John Zonaras 40
Jovan Vladimir 57, 74, 249
Jovan Vladislav 57, 74, 75, 96, 178, 182, 183, 250, 263, 306, 359
Justin II 214, 227, 228
Justinian I 110, 124, 140, 141, 143, 152, 170, 234, 267, 332, 333, 340, 342, 346, 347
Justinian II 299, 353
Kalokyros 38, 42, 43, 105, 209, 210, 247, 248, 253, 294, 312

K
Kekaumenos 3, 64, 65, 131, 205, 224
Konstantiniakos 25, 210, 214, 241
Konstantinos V Kopronimos 10
Konstantinos VII 3, 24, 30, 31, 33, 34, 40, 50, 51, 52, 53, 83, 88, 92, 93, 94, 100, 101, 106, 120, 125, 129, 130, 131, 154, 157, 160, 174, 197, 198, 199, 202, 207, 216, 217, 220, 228, 231, 245, 246, 266, 277, 284, 292, 296, 297, 300, 312, 315, 338, 339, 342, 346, 347, 353, 354, 355, 356, 362
Konstantinos VIII 67
Konstantinos IX Monomachos 197, 220
Konstantinos Diogenes 57
Konstantinos Doukas 28, 31
Konstantinos of Rhodes 39, 210
Kosara 57
Krakras 71, 74, 95, 96, 285, 307, 308
Krum 8, 9, 12, 13
Kurszan 25, 82

L
Lactantius 136
Leo Grammaticus 11, 15, 24, 25, 26, 27, 32, 35, 38, 82
Leo of Synada 263
Leo the Deacon 3, 32, 41, 42, 43, 44, 62, 65, 95, 105, 143, 146, 160, 176, 177, 185, 188, 189, 211, 224, 248, 253, 278, 297, 310, 312, 356, 359, 362
Leo III, pope 305
Leon V 318
Leon VI 4, 3, 19, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 36, 42, 53, 82, 83, 84, 101, 111, 121, 125, 126, 137, 143, 160, 164, 199, 204, 221, 240, 241, 243, 244, 255, 256, 257, 260, 276, 277, 278, 299, 312, 319, 346, 353
Leon Choerosphactès 3, 26, 27, 54, 208, 209, 210, 213, 214, 217, 224, 237, 242, 243, 251, 254, 255, 256, 257, 262, 263, 264, 265, 276
Leon Rhabduchus 54, 209, 210, 241, 279
Liudprand of Cremona 13, 22, 23, 43, 89, 109, 112, 117, 130, 135, 140, 154, 156, 175, 180, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 214, 215, 217, 218, 220, 221, 224, 233, 234, 235, 253, 267, 278, 292, 296, 300, 302, 303, 306, 309, 310, 311, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 341, 343, 345, 348,349, 350, 352, 354, 357, 358, 360, 361, 363
Louis III 50, 353
Louis IV 110
Louis the German 18
Louis the Pious 9, 50

M
Malamir 14
Maniakh 218
Marcian 11, 341
Maria Lekapena 39, 40, 60, 277, 305, 352, 354, 355, 356, 357
Marinus 343, 348
Maurikios 11, 3, 98, 111, 137, 138, 267, 346, 347
Methodius 3, 15, 18, 48, 142, 316, 318, 319, 320
Michael II Amorian 9, 46
Michael III 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 141, 143, 159, 163, 185, 199, 273, 274, 318, 322, 328, 332
Michael VII Doukas 292
Michael of Deabolis 69, 89
Michael Psellos 3, 63, 110, 114, 120, 167, 189, 291, 292, 294, 299, 351
Montesquieu 109
Moses 42, 60

N
Nasr ibn al-Azhar 309
Neophytos 210
Nicholas I 17, 20, 23, 223, 323, 324, 326
Nikephoros I Genikos 8, 185, 188
Nikephoros Erotikos 210
Nikephoros Ouranos 67
Nikephoros Phokas 26
Nikephoros II Phokas 41, 42, 43, 44, 62, 89, 136, 143, 144, 156, 170, 171, 174, 177, 180, 181, 184, 185, 197, 199, 203, 211, 221, 224, 247, 270, 278, 300, 354, 356
Niketas Helladikos 31, 210
Niketas Ooryphas 49, 146, 239, 279
Niketas of Paphlagonia 179
Niketas Skleros 25, 82, 210, 240
Nikon Metanoeite 3, 72
Nikolaos Mystikos 3, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 84, 135, 180, 197, 217, 237, 243, 244, 246, 254, 257, 258, 259, 262,

263, 264, 265, 268, 276, 277, 301, 304, 332, 355, 358, 359, 361, 362
Nizam al-Mulk 206

O

Octavian Augustus 119, 139
Olga 100, 107, 201, 233, 247, 297, 312, 316, 320, 327, 337, 343, 348, 350
Omurtag 13, 14, 18, 218, 274
Origen 136
Otto 46, 115, 180, 196, 215, 221, 234, 280, 329, 353, 354, 379, 383, 405

P

Paul the Silentiary 124, 126
Perun 102, 218, 286, 289, 290
Petar 5, 32, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 53, 54, 55, 56, 60, 62, 71, 73, 178, 181, 246, 270, 277, 278, 282, 297, 305, 328, 352, 354, 355, 356, 357
Peter the Patrician 340
Philotheos 27, 43, 56, 201, 231, 299
Phokas 26, 41, 43, 136, 199, 203, 228, 278, 350
Photios 19, 20, 97, 98, 99, 119, 126, 142, 275, 317, 318, 323, 324, 326, 327
Pietro II Orseolo 67, 68
Presian 10, 14, 16
Priest of Diocleia 3, 57, 73, 74, 178, 249, 250, 359
Procopius 170, 332
Pseudo-Symeon 27, 102
Richard, king 220

R

Ripseme 60
Romanos I Lekapenos 3, 22, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 47, 56, 140, 157, 175, 197, 219, 259, 260, 277, 297, 304, 305, 352, 355, 362
Romanos II 40, 44, 89, 93, 160, 213, 263, 310, 354, 362
Romanos III Argyros 114
Rostislav 18, 179

S

Samuil 5, 6, 42, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 89, 90, 107, 138, 146, 163, 171, 173, 178, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 189, 248, 249, 250, 263, 270, 285, 306, 308, 359, 372
Sergios 72, 210, 250
Simeon 5, 11, 3, 8, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 42, 47, 53, 54, 55, 56, 83, 84, 85, 90, 92, 95, 140, 145, 162, 163, 164, 173, 174, 180, 184, 197, 210, 214, 217, 221, 237, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 246, 251, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 262, 263, 264, 265, 273, 276, 277, 278, 282, 283, 284, 293, 297, 301, 304, 305, 307, 312, 322, 334, 337, 354, 355, 358, 359, 361, 362, 364, 371
Sinoutis 204
Skylitzes 4, 11, 3, 16, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 95, 96, 101, 105, 106, 107, 141, 142, 143, 146, 159, 161, 172, 175, 176,177, 178, 181, 182, 183, 184, 189, 190, 200, 209, 211, 219, 224, 233, 234, 241, 242, 244, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 252, 262, 263, 270, 274, 277, 278, 284, 290, 306, 307, 308, 312, 329, 331, 337, 342, 344, 348, 354, 357, 359
Staurakios 10, 121

St. Basil 136, 343
Stephen I, king of Hungary 90
Stephen of Sugdeia 98
Svyatoslav 42, 43, 44, 59, 89, 95, 96, 100, 105, 106, 162, 171, 173, 174, 175, 189, 218, 247, 248, 253, 270, 285, 289, 290, 293, 294, 295, 297, 312, 342, 356, 359
Synesius of Cyrene 124, 125, 130

T
Terbel, khan 299
Termatzous 88, 344
Tertullian 136, 380
Theodahat 342
Theodora 15, 16, 238
Theodoric 342
Theodoros Daphnopates 3, 197, 254, 259, 263, 264, 265, 361
Theodorus 252
Theodosios Aboukes 39, 210
Theodosius II 341, 347
Theoktistos Bryennios 16, 208, 209, 210, 238, 273
Theophanes Confessor 11, 15, 121, 346, 353, 362
Theophanes Continuatus 3, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 46, 47, 82, 85, 86, 87, 89, 95, 99, 101, 102, 103, 120, 138, 172, 175, 191, 197, 211, 213, 234, 239, 241, 242, 244, 245, 246, 263, 273, 274, 277, 278, 312, 315, 316, 343, 352, 354, 355, 357
Theophanes, protovestiarios 86, 210, 237, 253
Theophilos 10, 12, 14, 15, 97, 210, 213, 228, 342
Theophylaktos 124, 225
Thomas the Slav 9, 228
Tiberius II 110
Tomislav 55
Trpimir 52, 282, 328

V
Valentinus 109, 237, 252
Vladimir 100, 105, 106, 107, 142, 170, 270, 285, 290, 295, 327, 328, 336, 338, 343, 347, 348, 354, 355, 356, 357
Vladimir-Rasate 22, 24
Volos 102, 218, 286, 290
Voltaire 109

Y
Yahya of Antioch 62, 67, 70, 181, 183

Č
Časlav 56, 246, 247, 270, 297, 312, 394

Z
Zacharias, Serbian ruler 53, 54, 237, 252, 279, 337
Zdeslav 53
Zoe 31, 246
Ztathios 347

Index of other terms

anthypatos 55, 56, 71, 240, 246, 253, 256, 306
apokrisiarios 196, 207, 242, 245
archon 23, 24, 32, 34, 48, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 71, 86, 104, 199, 201, 220, 257, 259, 282, 286, 299, 300, 303, 323, 343, 345, 347
augustus 119, 134
ban 48, 211, 217, 235, 311
basileopator 355
basileus 5, 11, 5, 24, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37, 38, 164, 197, 222, 232, 233, 244, 257, 259, 260, 277, 278, 286, 299, 304, 305, 336, 344, 361
basilikos 207, 208, 245
bishopric 89, 318, 319, 329, 330, 331
bureau of Barbarians 155
chartoularios 204
chrysobull 38, 67, 84, 268
comistes 262
doge 67, 68
domestikos 26, 28, 177
domestikos ton scholon 26
droungarios 26, 49
ethnos 362
ethos 254, 260
genos 362
grand strategy 5, 6, 121, 122, 133, 139, 140, 149, 150, 151, 152, 155, 156, 164, 165, 170, 367, 374
gylas 87, 88, 89, 329, 344, 347
institutionalization 5, 6, 215, 216, 218, 225, 236, 365, 367
karchas 87, 88, 284, 301, 329
kastra 171
katepano 56, 60, 75
katepano, of the west 89
kavkhan 14
kentenaria 42, 44, 105, 174, 247, 295, 297, 311
khagan 81, 221, 223, 253, 255
khan 13, 17, 18, 19, 218, 238, 299, 320
kouropalates 73, 183, 280, 338, 343, 347, 348
laos 95, 104, 262, 362
logos 95, 104, 262, 362
logothesion 128, 207, 208
logothetes tou dromou 5, 6, 54, 155, 196, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 207, 210, 230
magistrianos 208
magistros 26, 29, 54, 59, 95, 114, 209, 210, 219, 255, 256, 277
mandylion 88, 317
mystikos 255
nomismata 282, 283, 294
oecumene 2, 33, 37, 40, 90, 98, 103, 108, 129, 133, 259, 260, 303, 304, 321, 325, 356, 366
oikonomia 59
panegyris 346
parakoimomenos 87, 210, 213
pathos 260
patrikios 11, 31, 42, 43, 49, 55, 56, 57, 70, 71, 85, 87, 88, 89, 121, 146, 172, 209, 210, 213, 222, 239, 240, 241, 245, 246, 247, 253, 255, 256, 282, 299, 300, 302, 306
philanthropy 159, 256, 295
prooimion 93, 111, 127, 128, 129, 137, 155, 157, 170, 195, 217
protospatharios 12, 16, 31, 56, 57, 70, 208, 209, 210, 238, 273
proteuon 42, 61, 71, 209, 210, 247, 249, 253
protovestiarios 86, 210
quaestor 25, 209, 210, 214, 241

ritualization 6, 5, 6, 88, 198, 215, 216, 217, 218, 225, 236, 237, 261, 309, 339, 365, 367
roga 302
sagion 302
skaramangion 260, 302, 312
solidi 84, 86, 95, 268, 286
spatharios 209, 256, 299
spatharokandidatos 57, 300
statecraft 4, 5, 6, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 131, 132, 133, 138, 139, 144, 150, 155, 156, 161, 164, 165, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 199, 208, 365, 366, 374
strategides 119, 144
strategos 11, 10, 12, 16, 32, 40, 46, 53, 54, 56, 57, 60, 64, 65, 75, 89, 96, 138, 209, 210, 241, 244, 245, 246, 279, 282
synkletikos 300
tagmata 26, 106, 287, 369
taxiarchos 300
thema 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 38, 45, 46, 53, 54, 55, 61, 62, 65, 68, 75, 85, 89, 172, 209, 241, 244
župan 45, 48, 66

BYZANTINE DIPLOMACY IN THE BALKANS AND THE PONTIC STEPPE (C.850-1020)

Dragan Gjalevski

Publisher
Institute of National History

About the Publisher
editor
prof. Mitko B. Panov

Reviewers
prof. Mitko B. Panov
prof. Dragan Zajkovski

Language editorial
Orhideja Zorova

Technical editing
Vladimir Hadji Pulevski

Printing
Grafoprom, Bitola

Circulation
100 copies

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација
Национална и универзитетска библиотека „Св. Климент Охридски“, Скопје

341.7(495.02:497)“0850/1020“
341.7(495.02:4/5)“0850/1020“
327(495.02)“0850/1020“

GJALEVSKI, Dragan
Byzantine diplomacy in the Balkans and the Pontic steppe :
(C.850-1020) / Dragan Gjalevski. - Skopje : Institute of national history, 2024. - 416 стр. : илустр. ; 24 см

Фусноти кон текстот. - Библиографија: стр. 377-406. - Регистар

ISBN 978-608-4981-04-6

а) Византиска дипломатија -- Балкан -- 850-1020 б) Византиска дипломатија -- Понтска степа -- 850-1020 в) Византија -- Надворешна политика -- 850-1020

COBISS.MK-ID 63673861